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# THE ARGOSY.

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MR. WARRENNE:

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

AT LADY JANE'S.

IT was a very gay party at Lady Jane Lockwood's, considering the time of year. Florence looked forward to this party for several reasons. She hoped that at the house of her hostess, it would be impossible for her to experience the kind of neglect that she had undergone on her first appearance after Captain O'Neill's death. And she trusted that Mr. Courtenay would gladly avail himself of the invitation she had playfully given him, and so be brought once more within the sphere of her dangerous charms. She knew that Miss Lockwood was five fathoms deep in love with Lord Thomas Mortimer—of whom honourable mention has been made—and that she had neither eyes nor ears for any other person. Miss Lockwood, therefore, with her golden hair and sleepy hazel eyes, was a very safe person to hold out as an inducement. And Florence, while she studded her fair ringlets with pomegranate blossoms, counted with delight on the triumph of bringing Mr. Courtenay to her feet, until she was launched on a gayer world as mistress of her father's establishment. For that day's news had not yet reached her ears—Lady Jane never read the papers, and Florence, in planning over her dress for the evening, had avoided all morning visitors.

She was quite satisfied with the effect of her dress of scarlet and white gauze—her coiffure was admirable—she was in high beauty again, for she had got over the temporary vexation of Captain O'Neill's suicide, and she pleased herself by thinking, as she looked for the last time in her glass, that had she been more culpable than she was in that affair, there were few men who would not pardon everything to such a form.

As she entered the ball-room, two of her admirers were standing

almost in the doorway—Mr. Roxby and Captain Le Grange—they bowed very coldly in reply to her gracious salutation, and stepped back to let her pass. As they had been exceedingly devoted of late, she was struck by their manner, but attributed it to the general feeling against her. They were poor creatures she knew—and if it were the fashion to censure her, they would follow the fashion.

The Thomason party were never very early, but as soon as they came, Mr. Courtenay sought out Florence.

"Well now, where's Miss Lockwood?" was his first salutation.

"Oh! you *are* come then, Mr. Courtenay," said Florence; "you must wait till after this mazurka to engage Miss Lockwood, for she is dancing now with Lord Thomas Mortimer."

"That young lady in pink—she really is very lovely," said Courtenay, sauntering near the dancers; "will you come and look at them?"

Florence took his arm, and they stood looking on. They danced the next waltz together; after which Courtenay led Florence to a couch where Mademoiselle Mohr and Sir Frederic were sitting.

Sir Frederic rose to make room for Florence.

"I say, Courtenay," he whispered. "Has she heard of the large addition her father has made to her family?"

"I believe not," he replied.

"Ah, it would be a pity to tell her—would not it?"

"Scandalous," said Courtenay.

"I say, I can't get that statue of your cousin out of my head," said Sir Frederic. "I suppose one could not get a copy of it?"

"Not usual," said Courtenay.

"Young Warrenne is going off immediately, is he not?" asked Sir Frederic.

"Yes; I shall miss him. He is a great favourite of mine," said Courtenay.

"Mademoiselle Mohr's *finale* was a perfect triumph to-night," said Sir Frederic.

"Was it? I congratulate you," said Courtenay to Mademoiselle Mohr.

"It is a pretty play," said the singer, "and that makes one's task easier. The audience are in good humour beforehand."

"I trust that you will allow me the honour of dancing with you again," said Sir Frederic.

"You are very good; I believe I shall not dance any more," replied the singer.

"If you relent, remember I am at your service," said Sir Frederic, and he went to seek another partner.

"Don't trust to his recollection, but dance this next set with me," said Courtenay.

"I am always willing to dance with Mr. Courtenay," replied the German.

Ada was coming towards them with Mr. Roxby. She wished her cousin to be her *vis-à-vis*. No one asked Florence to dance. There seemed to be a little difficulty in forming the quadrille, and just at that moment Captain Le Grange came up. It would have seemed perfectly natural that he should have solicited her hand, instead of which he took the vacant seat on the sofa beside her, and began by inquiring, with a great appearance of interest, after her health, which he feared was but indifferent, as she was not dancing.

This sudden interest, so different from his manner when she entered the room, rather surprised her; she replied coldly that she was perfectly well, but that she did not happen to be in the humour to dance this quadrille; she did not admire quadrilles.

"I rejoice to hear it," said her companion. "I feared that the excitement, however pleasurable, of recent events, might have been too much for you."

This speech appeared to Florence to bear only one interpretation. Captain Le Grange was referring to her feelings upon the death of his friend, and was insolent enough to hint that her emotions were pleasurable on that occasion.

She coloured deeply, but commanded her voice sufficiently to say with indifference, that she could hardly imagine her health affected by events in which she had no possible concern.

"Very true," remarked her companion mildly; "the principals are the only parties deeply concerned in such transactions—and possibly, you are extremely fond of children?"

Florence looked at him, but there was nothing in his ghastly countenance that might lead her to suppose that he had been drinking.

"Not particularly fond," she replied, coldly.

"Ah!" said he, in a tone of sympathy; "then my congratulations upon the recent marriage in your family must not include the two cherubs."

"You are under some mistake," said Florence; "my family is so limited in number that I am able to contradict such a report positively—there has been no marriage among my connections."

Captain Le Grange was now in a state approaching to ecstasy; he was actually the first to tell a piece of ill news.

A gleam of vice lit up his evil face.

"You are always in such spirits," he said, laughing faintly. "I dare say it amuses you to contradict it everywhere!"

"You are quite unintelligible this evening," replied Florence, haughtily.

"It is impossible you should not be aware of your father's marriage with Mrs. Lyle, a widow lady with two children, just before he set sail from Calcutta?" said Captain Le Grange. "It is in to-day's paper!"

For an instant her brain reeled—every trace of colour fled from

her face ; all her hopes, all her plans of power and triumph, destroyed by the very thought ; but she recovered herself in an instant—she had pride enough to nerve her to the effort. She would not give him the gratification of seeing her humbled by this news.

"Some people believe everything they see in the papers," she said, with all the scorn she could throw into her voice and face ; "you must permit me to doubt the accuracy of your information."

"Certainly," returned Captain Le Grange, in the most obliging manner. "I am quite sorry—it must be such a pleasure to have a mamma—to say nothing of the little brother and sister ! I am sorry for you, indeed—it ought to be true ! Roxby seems wonderfully taken with Miss Thomason," pursued Captain Le Grange, changing the subject ; "but then, poor fellow, we all know that the fortune is some inducement in his case."

This from Captain Le Grange, himself a notorious fortune-hunter, was almost ludicrous.

"I have observed the same predilection in several of Mr. Roxby's friends," said Florence, struggling against the stupor that seemed to weigh her down, and looking haughtily at Captain Le Grange ; "and I have had the pleasure of seeing them thoroughly defeated—a pleasure that I hope frequently to enjoy."

Captain Le Grange was past feeling any confusion ; but if he had a retort ready, she did not give him time to use it ; she rose and attempted to make her way through the crowd.

"Where are you going ?" asked Mr. Courtenay, meeting her, and offering her his arm.

"Anywhere !" she replied, impatiently.

"Let me help you, then," he said : "there's an abominable mob ; you will never be able to make your way alone."

He made room for her through the doorway, and led her into a little reading-room beyond the hall.

"Mr. Courtenay, I am ill," she said as she sank into a chair, gasping for breath. "If you could summon my maid without exciting attention, I should be glad. I wish to get upstairs."

She little knew that all her artifices possessed not a tenth part of the attraction that her genuine, unfeigned distress excited in his mind. He threw up the window, and crossed the room to inquire for her maid.

"What's her name ?" he asked as he was going out.

"Louise. But stay ; I gave her leave to go to the play to-night ; I knew the ball would be late ; I must do without her."

She sat for some moments in silence, pressing her hand to her forehead ; then looking up, she said, eagerly, "But *is* it true ?"

"I have no doubt of it," replied Courtenay.

"To suffer me to hear it by chance !" exclaimed Florence, in a tone of indignation.

"A letter from Erlsmede could not reach you till to-morrow,"



said Courtenay. "I am sure Mrs. Creswick would not leave you in the dark longer than could be helped."

"Will you light me that little lamp?" said Florence; "I will try to go upstairs now."

Courtenay lighted it. "Let me say one thing to you," he said, as he gave it into her hand. "You could never have looked on your father's house as your permanent home; and, therefore, the injury, from the sense of which you are now suffering, is at the worst but temporary."

"You are very good," said Florence, holding out her hand, "I hope I shall be very wise to-morrow."

Not the smile, not the glance with which she accompanied her words, had the least power to shake his composure.

He took her hand calmly, and was leading her through the hall, when the front door opened, and Mrs. Creswick stepped into the house.

"You will not announce me, if you please, to-night," she said to the servants who received her; "I see there is a ball going forward. Show me upstairs, and let Miss Reynolds know I shall be glad to see her."

"Miss Reynolds will be all the better for your company," said Mr. Courtenay, advancing.

"Florence, my dear!" cried Mrs. Creswick, affectionately.

"I'm so glad to see you, aunt," said Florence.

"I hoped I should have saved you the pain of learning this news by the papers," said Mrs. Creswick, when they were alone together in Florence's room. "I set off an hour after your father arrived with his wife at Erlsmede. He had no time to write before he left Calcutta, and the match was concluded in such haste, that the mail by which he last wrote could have brought us no hint of his project."

Florence burst into tears—the first she had shed; and these were not of unmixed sorrow for her disappointment; there mingled with them some regrets for the way she had often treated her aunt—her aunt who had been hurrying up to town to soften the keenness of this intelligence.

"Your father was most anxious that I should explain how impossible it was for him to write to you," said Mrs. Creswick; "he was desirous that you should not feel yourself neglected."

"My father has shown himself solicitous for my happiness!" said Florence, flashing up; "I thank him! He will find that I have taken the lesson to heart!"

"I entreat you, my dear, not to show any resentment in your manner," said Mrs. Creswick, earnestly. "My brother had an undoubted right to please himself; and—you do not know your father—he is the last person to bear anything like disrespect!"

"I will school myself, aunt," said Florence, haughtily; "I shall

have time before to-morrow evening, and my manner shall content even you."

"Florence, my love!" said Mrs. Creswick, taking her hands; "you know where to look for support in affliction—not only for consolation, but for help—for help, not only to support the suffering, but to grow wiser under the ordeal. I will leave you, my dear; for there are moments when we are strongest alone."

Mrs. Creswick withdrew, and Florence threw herself on her bed, resolved to lock her heart against all the world—to return hatred for injury; and to affect indifference where resistance was of no avail.

## CHAPTER XX.

### NEW TIES.

"You will find Mrs. Reynolds a very pleasing young woman, my dear," said Mrs. Creswick, as they were journeying towards Erlsmede the next day; "and her little children are beautiful creatures."

"Does she set up for a beauty herself?" asked Florence.

"She is very pretty," said Mrs. Creswick, with a sigh at the bitterness of her niece's tone.

"What age may she be?"

"About four or five-and-twenty."

"My rival every way!" thought Florence; "young, pretty, and the mistress of my father's house."

Like many of those exquisitely fair women, Florence possessed a great deal of decision and character; she had great powers of endurance, very seldom gave way to tears; was personally courageous; and by no means deficient in intellect. All her bad qualities had been pampered and fostered at school—her artifice, her vanity, her selfishness—but she had a heart, and she was almost sensible of it for the first time, when she felt herself drawn towards her aunt. Mrs. Creswick was some one on whom she could rely—she had never wronged her—never deceived her—and in spite of her own ungracious behaviour, she felt assured of her sympathy in this first trial of her life.

She now arranged her plans of action, and nerved herself to go through the approaching meeting with a resolution which, in a better cause, would have been heroic.

As they neared Erlsmede, Mrs. Creswick pressed her hand.

"I fear for you, my dear," she said in an anxious tone.

"Watch me, aunt," said Florence, calmly. "You will detect nothing in my manner."

"It is so difficult to feign," said Mrs. Creswick.

"Not to me," returned Florence.

Although it was quite dusk when they drove up to the house, there

were two figures walking on the terrace—one, by his height, Florence knew to be Colonel Creswick—the other, she supposed, her father.

They both came directly to the carriage door. Florence got out first, and found herself in her father's arms. He kissed her and led her rapidly across the hall into the drawing-room—the little colonel hopping after them, full of solicitude as to whether “dearest madam was cold, tired, or hungry.”

Mrs. Reynolds was seated by the fire. She rose as her husband approached, leading Florence.

“Mrs. Reynolds, let me present my daughter to you,” he said.

Florence embraced her with the most natural air in the world.

“I am delighted to see you,” said Mrs. Reynolds, in a low, soft voice. “Mr. Reynolds, I really must compliment you on your daughter.”

“People will be apt to quarrel with Mr. Reynolds, madam,” said the colonel, approaching Mrs. Reynolds; “he has monopolised so much beauty and grace. But I doubt not that some fortunate man will persuade him to divide his treasures.”

“Yes, that will be the end of it, I dare say,” said Mrs. Reynolds, glancing with a smile at Florence.

Mr. Reynolds did not seem to hear them. He stood with his arm round Florence, gazing earnestly and admiringly at her.

“And this is *little* Florence,” he said at last, as if recalling to himself the waxen beauty he had sent over to England at five years of age.

“Surely,” thought Mrs. Creswick, “she must be touched by his manner.”

Florence *was* touched, though she tried to shake off the feeling.

“I think we shall be encroaching on your dinner-hour, Colonel Creswick,” said she. “It is almost six, and Louise is not the most speedy of tirewomen.”

“I think we may prevail on the gentlemen to dispense with our toilets to-day,” said Mrs. Creswick.

The colonel made a bow almost as low as the cushion of his chair, while he expressed his acquiescence in Mrs. Creswick's suggestion.

When they were seated at table, Florence had time to survey her new-found relatives. Mrs. Reynolds was a graceful-looking young woman, with an olive complexion, and the softest possible dark eyes and hair. She was expensively dressed, and there was a pretty helplessness about her that was very agreeable to gentlemen.

Mr. Reynolds resembled his sister, although his features were more regular; indeed, in his youth he must have been remarkably handsome. But the character of severity which might be sometimes traced in her countenance, was revealed in all its rigour on his. The rigid lines of his firmly-closed mouth, and the determination expressed in his dark brow, gave an air of displeasing sternness to his face in repose.

Florence was anxious to make out the degree of influence that Mrs. Reynolds had over her father ; but she was quite misled if she formed any opinion on the subject from the amount of fondness he might display towards his wife. He avoided systematically all show of emotion, and she would have known how to value his reception of herself, had she been aware of the proportion between his feelings and their expression.

"I must take an early opportunity of calling on Mr. Warrenne," said Mr. Reynolds. "I promised his son that I would do so. And I owe to Dr. Warrenne obligations that I can never repay."

"That dear Dr. Warrenne !" interposed Mrs. Reynolds.

Mr. Reynolds went on to explain that Mrs. Reynolds (then Mrs. Lyle) and her son had been dangerously ill of a fever somewhere up the country, and that Dr. Warrenne had attended them with such unremitting care, that, under Providence, they owed to him the preservation of their lives.

"Very good news for Mr. Warrenne," said Mrs. Creswick.

"And it was not only his skill, though I think him wonderfully clever," said Mrs. Reynolds, "but he was so kind to poor little Edward ; he used to sit nursing him in the verandah for hours when he got better, looking at those travelling jugglers with their goats."

"And here come the little ones !" said Mrs. Creswick, as a servant entered, leading two beautiful children. The little girl was dark, like her mother, with chestnut rings of hair curling all over her head, and the warm, sunny complexion of a peach. The boy, still more beautiful, with dark eyes and long golden ringlets. There was no silly fuss with the children. Mrs. Reynolds held out her hand to the boy, and the girl crept up to Mr. Reynolds, and was lifted on his knee. And then the boy struggled away from his mamma, and climbed up on the other knee. Mrs. Reynolds looked much gratified at her husband's fondness for her children—indeed, from the time they appeared, he seemed to see and think of nothing else. He cut an orange for Lucy, and gave Edward some glittering bon-bons on the side of his own plate, and pretended to look another way when the boy stooped and sipped from his full wineglass, while his bright eyes wandered round the table to see if he was observed.

Mrs. Creswick, who perceived that her niece's patience was wearing rather thin, presently rose to leave the room ; Mrs. Reynolds, with a child in each hand, leading the way.

"Do you work, Mrs. Reynolds?" asked Mrs. Creswick, drawing towards her her little ebony table with its shaded lamp and working implements.

"No. Do you know my eyes are so bad I don't ever venture to work," said Mrs. Reynolds. "At least, my sight is indifferent : I am always rather afraid of becoming near-sighted."

"That must likewise be a drawback to reading by candle-light," said Mrs. Creswick.

"Yes ; but I seldom read. In the morning I have no time, and in the evening there are gentlemen ; and then a little music, or perhaps cards."

"You play then," said Mrs. Creswick.

"Yes ; I sing to the guitar ; I think gentlemen prefer singing. Lucy—Edward, my pet, Harley is waiting ; come and kiss mamma, and say good-night to Mrs. Creswick."

The children were dismissed, much to the relief of Florence, who found it difficult to endure the presence of the little usurpers ; though it was evident that they were well-trained, obedient children, and beautiful enough to prepossess most persons in their favour.

While Mrs. Creswick and Mrs. Reynolds kept up a desultory conversation together, Florence had time to think over her position and her plans for the future.

She determined (as she had done the first moment she heard the news of her father's marriage) with regard to her position, that it was unbearable ; the next thing to be determined was her escape. This was only to be effected through her marriage ; and she passed in review the few pretenders to her hand who yet remained constant enough to give her a hope.

Captain Le Grange was too insufferable ; she feared that Mr. Roxby had gone over to Miss Thomason, and then he had actually nothing. Mr. Courtenay, he was well off, and had great expectations—but no, he would not do—he was too rigid—too strict ; she hoped she might subdue him, but she could not venture to marry him. Perhaps, with a little management, she might secure Lord Thomas Mortimer, if no unlucky chance enlightened her father as to his character. And then she reverted with a sigh to Leonard Warrenne, whose principles, and temper, and intellect, were such as would bear investigation and—who had loved her for herself.

"Where are the children ?" asked Mr. Reynolds of his wife, when the gentlemen joined them in the drawing-room.

"Gone to bed this half hour," replied Mrs. Reynolds ; "little Edward was quite tired."

"They seem sweet, tractable creatures," said Mrs. Creswick.

"They are not spoiled, Agatha," said Mr. Reynolds.

Florence was recalled from her reverie by the unwonted sound of her aunt's name ; she was just thinking that if she became Lady Thomas Mortimer, she would be so fortunate as to take precedence of Mrs. Reynolds, when her father sat down beside her, and said :

"You and I, my dear, have to make acquaintance with each other."

She sat upright, smiled becomingly, and waited to hear what he would say.

"My plan is to go to town for this season," he pursued, "and then to purchase a place in this neighbourhood. I question if London would agree with Mrs. Reynolds's health for any length of time ; and the children, also, will be better in the country."

"*They* are to be considered first," thought Florence. "I have only to hope that this season will do my business."

"So that whatever masters you wish to profit by, my dear, I shall gladly furnish you with during the ensuing season. Music and painting, I suppose, you will be anxious to learn; but whatever graver studies you desire to pursue, it will give me pleasure to afford you the opportunity."

"You are all kindness," said Florence, restraining her indignation at being considered as a school-girl.

"With regard to language, now," said Mr. Reynolds; "you are acquainted with French and Italian, of course?"

"Certainly," replied Florence.

"Can you converse fluently in both those languages?" asked her father.

"Not in Italian," said Florence. "I learned as much as the other girls. I know very well how to translate a song."

"Then you have an agreeable pursuit before you," said her father, "in perfecting yourself in that language; it is possible that we may winter in Italy, and then you will find the value of your acquirement."

"I hope before that time," thought Florence, "to be beyond your jurisdiction."

"I daresay you are aware," continued her father, who interpreted the smiling grace of her manner into perfect acquiescence, "that the education we receive at school is valueless compared to that which we give ourselves in after life; yours is now beginning—and I think you are singularly fortunate that you have leisure to form your character and intellect, instead of being compelled thus early to direct your powers to the management of a large establishment."

"Perhaps," said Florence, with the sweetest simplicity, "you had a view, most kindly to my benefit, in your present marriage?"

"That consideration was not without its influence upon my decision," said her father gravely: "a girl placed at the head of a house, occupies a very false position, and is liable to become spoiled by attentions which are paid to her situation and not to herself."

"And no doubt," said Florence, modestly, "Mrs. Reynolds will have the kindness to assist me in forming my plans of study, for I fancied I had done with learning when I left school, and I fear I should be quite awkward in setting about it again."

This was said maliciously, for Florence detected that Mrs. Reynolds had a very common kind of mind, though it was evident that she had some idea of right and wrong, and had done her best in training her children. But Mr. Reynolds did not appear embarrassed by the request.

"Mrs. Reynolds is a mother," he said, "and her children have the first claim upon her care. I shall be glad to give you every assistance, and, above all, to put you upon a course of reading which will



strengthen your mind and enlarge your views. In history, for instance, it is scarcely possible but that you have still much to learn."

Poor Florence! in history, except a few names sadly jumbled together in her head, she had *all* to learn; and in everything that related to literature, she was equally uninformed—and she detested study; she always had done so—but now, when she had expected to be launched upon the world, admired and envied, to be calmly told that she had to begin her education. Many and deep were the vows that she breathed to accept the very first man, rich enough and docile enough, who should offer to free her from her bondage. To her infinite relief Mrs. Reynolds was rising to retire; she seized the candle which the polite little Colonel was lighting for her, and hastened to her room—to think and be wretched.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### "A LITTLE MISTAKE."

ABOUT the same time that Miss Reynolds was so suddenly recalled from London to make the acquaintance of her father and his family, Leonard came down to Erlsmede to take leave of his father and sisters, to bid farewell to Mrs. Digby, and to make a few hasty arrangements for his travels.

There was something of solemnity in Mrs. Digby's farewell interview with Leonard. She mentioned to him several improvements which she should wish carried out on her estate in case she did not live to complete them; recommended to him several old pensioners, who though their little income was secured to them would be cheered by a continuance of the kindness she had hitherto shown them, and expressed her conviction that she was resigning her responsibilities into worthy hands. He was much affected by the tone of her parting admonitions; for there was nothing in his disposition of that avarice which forms so leading a feature in the characters of the rising generation: her liberality had enabled him to gratify his warmest wishes in seeing foreign countries; and he sincerely desired that it might be many years before he should be called upon to fill her place.

It has been said that his plans occasioned a good deal of discussion in the village. He little imagined that he was a person of sufficient importance to excite any interest whatever by the apparent mystery of his proceedings; but in the meantime people went on wondering why he had left Mr. Thomason's—on which side the discontent had originated—what he meant to do next—who was to pay for his travels, and other matters with which (it might occur to a bystander) they had nothing at all to do. Mr. Warrenne was so perfectly candid in his

disposition that he would most likely have at once relieved the anxieties of his neighbours respecting his son's prospects, if he had not been restrained by Mrs. Digby's wishes on the subject.

Florence shared in the general curiosity. She had never seriously believed that there was the least probability of a marriage between Leonard and Mrs. Digby, and she felt, though she had no reasonable grounds for her belief, that, somehow or other, his position in life was altered, and that the homage he had once been presumptuous in offering would now be acceptable. Perhaps, she even went so far as to think, in the present disastrous state of her affairs, it might be possible for her to be brought to think of marrying him. She had always preferred him to every one else—her father must of course make her a handsome allowance, though he had so cruelly robbed her of her birthright; they might manage to live very comfortably, and at least she should be delivered from the presence of that odious Mrs. Reynolds and her children.

She was indulging in this reverie on the morning after her arrival at Erlsmede, and had almost forgotten the presence of the obnoxious individuals at the breakfast-table, when she was roused by the soft voice of Mrs. Reynolds saying to little Lucy, as she held out her jewelled hand:

"Shall I trouble you, dear, for the cream jug?"

Florence came to the child's assistance; and Mr. Reynolds said, gravely, to the little girl:

"You should always be on the watch at table, and not suffer your mamma to ask twice for anything."

The child coloured, and Florence felt an undefined sense of awe at her father's manner. He seemed a person who would overlook nothing, and who would exact from all who surrounded him an absolute submission to his will.

"You shall introduce us this morning to Mr. Warrenne and his family," said Mr. Reynolds, addressing her.

"I shall be very happy," returned Florence.

Mr. Warrenne was gone out upon his rounds when the Reynolds party called at his house. Leonard did not appear, and Maud and Alice were obliged to entertain their guests as they best might. Mrs. Reynolds seemed soon to become familiar with Maud. Music was a subject upon which they agreed. Mrs. Reynolds promised to show Maud her guitar, and got up to try the seraphine. This brought Alice forward; she rose to open the instrument, and, at the request of Mrs. Reynolds, she played a sacred air.

Mrs. Reynolds then sat down, and amused herself by trying a few chords upon the keys.

"It is so sweet; do listen, Mr. Reynolds," she said. "I should think now, this was just the sort of music to charm you."

"Do you think you should like such an instrument?" said Mr. Reynolds.

"Oh! I am wild to have one. I declare I could steal yours, my dear Miss Alice, with all the pleasure in the world!"

"You shall find one ready for you in Portman Square," said Mr. Reynolds, without any inflexion of his hard unbending manner.

"A thousand thanks—you are so *very* kind!" returned Mrs. Reynolds, evidently pleased; but so used to be petted and waited upon, that she received such marks of attention as the natural tribute to her charms. "Do you know," she added, "you must not think me rude, but I'm going to take my bonnet off; I do so object to sitting long in a bonnet; and then, my dear Miss Alice, I'm going to beg for another tune."

The bonnet, with its trailing sprig of wild convolvulus, was laid on the table, the gloves thrown beside it, and then Mrs. Reynolds, drawing her chair almost into the fire, and resting her clasped hands on her knee, composed herself alternately to talk and to listen.

"And so your brother is not at home," she said, turning to Maud; "I do so regret it; I hear he is charming. I cannot think who told me so. Was it you, dear Florence?"

"No," replied Florence, coldly, turning towards her stepmother; "I am not aware of having mentioned Mr. Leonard Warrenne."

"It is quite a pity he is going to travel, because he might have sung glees so nicely with us," continued Mrs. Reynolds. "How sweet that movement is; Mozart, I suppose, Miss Alice, and very difficult. What a finished musician you are!"

"I thought as much," said Mr. Reynolds, who had been listening with grave attention.

"You are very lenient with me," said Alice, moving quietly from the instrument. "Music is my one amusement, and therefore it would be strange if I could not play with tolerable ease."

"I declare I have not asked you if you were musical, dear Florence?" said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Oh dear no," replied Florence. "I had always imagined that proficiency in those things was exclusively the province of professional people."

"This young lady," said Mr. Reynolds, looking at Alice, "teaches you that a high degree of excellence can be attained in private life."

Florence dared not reply.

"Now I think, Mrs. Reynolds," said Mr. Reynolds, making a slight movement with his hat, which he carried in his hand.

"This moment," said Mrs. Reynolds, taking her bonnet from Maud. "I'm going, though very unwillingly, I do assure you. That darling seraphine! Do come soon, my dear Miss Warrenne: I long to show you my children."

"And I am so fond of children," said Maud. "I shall be delighted to see them."

"Oh, but perhaps you could come back with me," said Mrs.

Reynolds. "I daresay Mr. Reynolds would not mind waiting a minute while you put on your things."

"It would give me pleasure," said Mr. Reynolds with his usual gravity. "I should like to present the little ones to Miss Warrenne, particularly little Edward, who owes so much to her brother's kindness."

Maud could not but acquiesce in so polite an arrangement. She went upstairs to dress, and hurried down to join her friends. Alice, left to herself, sat down to one of Mozart's Masses.

She had been playing some time without interruption, when the drawing-room door was thrown open by Dinah, with the announcement of "Mr. Scudamore."

Alice left the seraphine, and moved gracefully towards the newcomer without the slightest trace of blindness in her gestures except a trifling movement of her left hand, which served to warn her if there was any furniture in her way.

"How do you do, grandfather?" she said, holding out her beautiful little pink hand; "I hope you have grace enough to be ashamed to look me in the face, after having forgotten these three weeks to bring me my jonquil and hyacinth roots."

Her hand was taken, and at the same moment she coloured the brightest crimson, and drew it hastily away.

"Mr. Scudamore!" she exclaimed.

"A little mistake, Mistress Alice," said Mr. Scudamore, stepping forward, and shaking hands with her cordially; "you got hold of the wrong person;—it was only Dick—that's all!"

The tone in which he pronounced "that's all" was amusing—as if the universe contained nothing that could equal him.

At the same moment her hand was gently taken again—only just touched—and she was led to a chair; while a voice, whose peculiar tone thrilled in her ear, said:

"I see, Miss Warrenne, it is in vain for me to attempt to pass for my father at present."

"This is Alice, you know," said Mr. Scudamore, by way of introduction—"that's Dick. But where the deuce is Queen Maud?"

"I expect her back from the Ferns every minute," said Alice: then, with a sweetness of manner that supplied the place in her of a knowledge of etiquette, she said: "I hope, Captain Scudamore, you have found a chair, for I know you ought not to be standing."

"But, I say," exclaimed Mr. Scudamore, interrupting the thanks which his son seemed to have some difficulty in making audible, "this won't do—the days draw in so quickly now, we shall have it dark before Queen Maud comes back!"

"But, dear grandfather," said Alice, drawing her chair closer to the table, and feeling for her basket of cotton fringe, "I suppose you will allow that even in the dark Maud might cross over from the lodge to our garden-gate without running any great danger."

"Oh! as to that," said Mr. Scudamore, with a disappointed air, "but this owl-light is not what I—eh, Dick?"

Captain Scudamore did not answer. He remained gazing on Alice with an emotion of pity and delight that kept him silent. He had on his first entrance supposed her to be Maud, from her singular beauty, and because he had detected no sign of blindness in her movements. And now, the excessive softness of her complexion, the gentleness of her manner, the sweet tones of her voice, and the touching helplessness of her deprivation, seemed to him to combine all that is most bewitching in woman.

The silence remained unbroken for some minutes, except by the slight sound of the fringe which was weaving rapidly beneath the practised fingers of Alice. The first interruption that occurred was the entrance of Leonard, who, hearing that the Scudamores were below, ran downstairs, hurried into the room, shook hands with the father, congratulated the son (it was his first appearance out of doors), stirred up the fire, transferred Alice and her basket to the sofa, took possession of her chair, and set in for a gossip.

Alice now began to enjoy herself; sitting in the corner weaving quietly, and as she thought unnoticed, she could listen again to that peculiar voice which had so struck her in the few words she had yet heard from Captain Scudamore.

There are very few people who speak in tune, or who have a tolerable quality of voice in speaking; and Alice, as a blind person, was extremely sensitive to the tone of voice; she formed her opinion of people very much from this single particular, and she fancied she could detect feeling and candour in the clear vibrating intonation of Captain Scudamore; not from anything he said, for they were talking on the commonest subjects.

"And how is Mrs. Thorne?" said Leonard.

"Pretty well, considering that she underwent a scene this morning with the rat-catcher. She deposed to his bringing a stock of dead rats with him, and claiming so much a head for his work as if they had perished under his ferrets in our barns."

"A common trick enough," said Leonard, laughing. "How did it end?"

"Oh, it ended of course in paying the fellow his demand and sending him away, and then unburdening her mind to Jack Robins and myself on the growing depravity of the lower classes. I directly undertook to answer for the perfectibility of human nature in general, and rat-catchers in particular; and we three plunged into a course of metaphysics in the wood-yard."

"Ha, there's Queen Maud!" exclaimed Mr. Scudamore, starting up as a clear voice and a rapid step were heard in the hall. "Leonard, stir up the fire; let's have a blaze! Now, Dick, here she is, my boy!"

As he uttered these last words, he threw the door back to its very

furthest extent, met Maud as she reached the threshold, and led her triumphantly into the very middle of the room.

"How very rude you are, grandfather," said Maud, disengaging her hand from Mr. Scudamore. Captain Scudamore rose and bowed. She returned his salutation with a brilliant smile, hoped he was quite recovered, went up to Alice and examined the progress of her fringe, and then, turning to Mr. Scudamore, she desired him to be very entertaining in her absence, for that it was requisite she should go and take off her bonnet.

She was back before any one else could have been, with her shining hair smoothed, her colour heightened by the haste she had made, and her eyes sparkling like jewels by the firelight. She made room for herself between Alice and Mr. Scudamore, leaned back, unfolded her handkerchief, and, after a brief pause, during which she seemed to recover breath after her exertions, she said :

"Now, I am going to tell you all about the little Lyles !"

"First of all, Queen Maud, I am going to tell *you* that we dine here," interrupted Mr. Scudamore.

"Extremely glad, only I took that for granted, so don't put me out," said Maud. "You never did, I suppose, Mr. Scudamore, and I'm sure, Leonard, *you* never did in all your life see such exquisite children !"

"Are you fond of children, Miss Warrenne ?" asked Captain Scudamore.

"Oh, very—at least, pretty ones ; I can't think what ugly children were made for !" said Maud. "And I wonder what keeps papa so late ; have you any idea, Leonard, where he is gone ?"

"To Mrs. Digby's, as usual," replied Leonard.

"I hate that common," said Maud, with energy ; "with not a house to be seen—just the place where accidents always happen, grandfather."

"And such a high-mettled racer as the white horse adds to the probability," said Mr. Scudamore, laughing.

"I wish I could hear his step," returned Maud. "Hark ! I believe there he is ! Now, I wonder whether Karl is in the way to take the horse. I hope they haven't sent him into the village on any of their pottering errands !"

The sound of a horse's hoofs scrambling on the gravel decided her at least to go and see. She darted from the room to the entrance, and presently her voice was heard exchanging scraps of German with Karl, and questioning her father about the length of his ride.

"How would you do for a soldier's wife ?" asked Mr. Scudamore, looking delightedly at her as she re-entered the room, leaning on her father's arm.

Maud, affecting not to hear this question, merely remarked that she believed the dinner was ready. Karl's grotesque head at the door seemed to confirm this suggestion.



"Well, then," said Mr. Scudamore, stepping a little back, as if to give his son an opportunity of offering his arm.

"Eh! what have I done, grandfather?" said Maud; "don't you mean to give me your arm?"

"You termagant!" said Mr. Scudamore, placing her at the head of the table. "I believe you have a pleasure in thwarting me!"

"Far from it, Mr. Scudamore," said Maud, leaning back in her chair; "I am going, or rather, Leonard is going, to send you some soup."

Captain Scudamore, on the other side of her, offered his services.

"No; I think I won't bore you," replied Maud. "Leonard always carves for me when he is at home."

Maud had heard Captain Scudamore's name so often mentioned, that she could not fail to have formed some idea to herself of his appearance. She had most unreasonably associated him in her mind's eye with Mrs. Digby, simply because her father was attending them both at the same time; and had pictured them a couple of nervous invalids, who coddled themselves excessively, spoke in whispers, and looked very yellow. She was not herself more unlike Mrs. Digby than Captain Scudamore to the portrait her fancy had drawn of him. He was decidedly handsomer than his father—more stately in his bearing—more accurate in the sculptured outline of his features. There was something intelligent and serene in the expression of his large blue eyes, and his address was perfectly devoid of affectation. He gave freer expression to his thoughts than is usual with men who have been much about in the world, and was well-informed, without having attended much to literary topics.

"You knew Mrs. Reynolds in India, did you not, Captain Scudamore?" asked Maud.

"Mrs. Lyle I knew very well; I have not seen her since she became Mrs. Reynolds," said Captain Scudamore. "She was a very pleasant woman; but these second marriages——"

"You don't like them!" said Maud, eagerly.

"They are so mortifying to one's vanity," said Captain Scudamore, smiling, "to see a woman take another husband as she would another butler, when the place becomes vacant—the first respectable man whose character answers—one feels it may be one's own case some day; and I was well acquainted with Lyle, who was an excellent fellow."

"He will marry a widow," said Mr. Scudamore, looking very mischievously at Maud, as if he wished her to be made uncomfortable by the assertion; "it is always the way with fellows when they rail against such things!"

Maud nodded her acquiescence; and Leonard exclaimed hastily:

"But you have not yet seen *Miss* Reynolds!" and then stopped as abruptly, confused with having made the remark.

"That's a pleasure to come," said Captain Scudamore, turning

quickly towards him as he spoke ; " and in the meantime you can tell me what to expect."

" That he can ! " said Mr. Scudamore.

" I believe she is thought very handsome," said Leonard, busying himself with the chestnuts on his plate.

Maud and Captain Scudamore smiled ; Alice looked uneasy.

" And when do you find yourself in Paris, Master Leonard ? " asked Mr. Scudamore

" The day after to-morrow, I hope," said Leonard.

" It is a pity," said Mr. Warrenne, addressing Captain Scudamore, " that, as you have never seen Paris, you could not have arranged to go with my boy."

" I could not afford it," said Captain Scudamore ; " that is," he added with a smile, " I could not afford the time. My stay in England being limited, I should grudge losing even a few weeks of my father's company ; and I am sure nothing would ever move *him* to Paris."

Maud, who had just risen, and was going out of the room, hand-in-hand with Alice, paused to give Mr. Scudamore a look and smile, which made him follow her just outside the door, and hold her back while he whispered, " Well, now, Queen Maud, what do you think of him ? "

" I shall not tell you, grandfather ; I shall keep my opinion secret," she answered with a provoking smile.

" Oh, you plague ! " returned Mr. Scudamore ; " you know what he thinks of you—what everybody must, who sees you ! "

" Certainly," replied Maud, with a slight touch of irony in her voice ; " you and I, grandfather, have only to be seen to be admired ! "

When the sisters were alone in the drawing-room, they sat in silence for some time ; at last Alice said, as if to herself, " I wonder whether he will soon see her ! "

" Who is to be seen, dear ? " asked Maud.

" If Captain Scudamore will see Miss Reynolds," said Alice, colouring deeply as she spoke.

" He will have the honour, sooner or later, of course," said Maud ; " all the sooner, because he hears that she is a beauty."

" I don't think she deserves——" said Alice, and then she stopped in confusion.

" The homage of Captain Scudamore ? " asked Maud, laughing. " She will have it though, you may depend ; she is, as Leonard says, irresistible ! "

## CHAPTER XXII.

## CAPTAIN SCUDAMORE.

"He has done it! I said so! He has been! I saw him go into the Ferns this very minute, bouquet and all!" cried Maud, running in from the garden, all animation, to her sister, who sat by the fire, working. "I knew he would! He dined there yesterday, and this morning, *voilà!* She has made short work, sad havoc, with poor Captain Scudamore's heart, in one little evening! I'm so glad, because, you know, I said it would be so!" And Maud took the chair on the other side of the fireplace, drew off her garden-gloves, loosened her shawl, and set to work in good earnest upon some useful fabric which she drew from a basket that stood on the ground beside her.

"You saw him go in then, Maud?" said Alice in a quiet tone.

"I did, by this token, that he was on horseback, and therefore did no credit to my second sight, which depicted him, if you remember, hobbling along with a walking-stick!"

"Did he see you?" asked Alice.

"Not he, my dear; he has no eyes at present, except for one object, and a very handsome object, too, though no friend of ours."

Now it happened that during the three days which had intervened between Maud's prophecy and its fulfilment, Captain Scudamore had managed to spend the best part of each morning with the sisters. He had listened with the most rapt attention to their singing; had helped them to work in their garden—to play with the children from the Ferns—and was always on the watch to render Alice those little cares which her blindness might warrant, though few people stood in less need of them than herself. And it happened that in his conversation, which was unaffected almost to bluntness, he never uttered a disgraceful sentiment—so that, instead of offending his hearers by the overflowing coarseness and selfishness which teems in every word that most young men utter, he gave people the impression, quite unconsciously on his part, of being an honest man.

Therefore the sisters became acquainted with him so rapidly that they could hardly believe that they had known him but a few days; and therefore Alice now sat with a shade of deep vexation overspreading her countenance, while she went on mechanically with her knitting. Maud was perfectly unable to enter into her sister's feelings upon this occasion; not being of a character at all liable to sudden attachments, she had not begun to entertain any regard for Captain Scudamore beyond that of a common and recent acquaintance: he might pay as much attention to Miss Reynolds as he liked, without causing her any emotion beyond that of extreme amusement in

watching his proceedings—and, beautiful as she was, she was too unused to homage to feel piqued that her pretensions were overlooked for another woman.

But Alice took the matter keenly to heart. With the simplicity of a very young mind, she had believed all the nonsense which Mr. Scudamore's good-nature and high spirits led him to talk to Maud about his son. She valued her sister's beauty and talents with a jealous sensibility—she thought that the moment Captain Scudamore saw Maud, he would think of her as his father wished he might. She was prepossessed herself by what she knew of him, and she looked on him as something that belonged to Maud; but something, also, that Miss Reynolds, with her usual unprincipled vanity, was very likely to pervert to her own purposes. This was an injury to her sister that she felt deeply, and she was not a little mortified that Maud seemed so indifferent to her wrongs.

"I don't think it is very kind of you, dear, to laugh so much at Captain Scudamore," said Alice, gently, after a long pause on both sides.

"Stop, dear! I'm going to put on some coals," cried Maud, evidently on the brink of going off again at this admonition. "Now then!" she continued, when she had made up the fire to her satisfaction; "I assure you, if I had anything else to amuse me at this present time, I would altogether overlook 'Dick;' but——"

"And I don't think you ought to call him 'Dick,' exactly," pursued Alice.

"Not *exactly*? Would *Diccon* be a pleasant amendment? There is a legend, I once read, of a certain 'Diccon bend the bow.' And pray why shouldn't I laugh?"

"Because you know how vexed Mr. Scudamore would be if—if his son really paid attention to Miss Reynolds."

"Why, my dear Alice, you never could suppose that I believed all the nonsense our good grandfather used to talk, as if he could make me a present of Master Dick—like a child saving up a toy to give to its playfellow!"

Alice was silent.

"And of all the nonsense that people talk in this foolish world," pursued Maud, warming with her subject, "the folly they utter on the subject of love is the most deplorable! Falling in love! I don't believe there is such a thing! No, Alice, I don't really! Two idle people drop into each other's society, and being utterly without occupation, they first mope a little, and then marry; and they try to persuade their acquaintances they were in love! It is a disease, at any rate; and I don't believe that a sober woman who loves her relations and employs her mind, will ever love any one else! The thing can't happen! And I'm really gratified by Mr. Scudamore's opinion of my taste, if he thinks I could be induced to quit *my father* for the sake of Master Dick!"

"Hush!" said Alice, turning her head towards the door, "I hear his step!"

"Ah! I know an old proverb," said Maud, snapping her thread from the energy with which she worked and talked together. "But you are right, Alice. He has made a short visit at the Ferns."

Captain Scudamore now came in, with the very scroll which Maud had tried to pass off for a bouquet. He shook hands with the sisters, drew his chair next to Alice, and gave Maud the paper, saying that his father had desired him to bring it to her.

"Many thanks; now don't forget to tell Mr. Scudamore how much I am obliged to him. You have not the best memory in the world! Alice, this is a movement from Spohr's 'Faust'—you will like it so much—I'll play it to you."

Maud always railed at Captain Scudamore; and he liked it; inasmuch as every man had rather be abused than overlooked.

"But I thought I should have found my father here," said Captain Scudamore; "he asked me to call on Colonel Creswick about a horse we were talking of yesterday, and said that I should be sure to find him with you on my return."

"If you were a little older, Captain Scudamore," said Maud, looking gravely at him over the top of the music desk, "you would know how to limit your expectations to probabilities. Mr. Scudamore retains none of the habits of a military life. He neither drinks, swears, nor is punctual."

"Perhaps, in consideration of the two first omissions, you will forgive him the last," said Captain Scudamore.

"And really, when it is not quite true," interposed Alice, with her usual gentleness; "for Mr. Scudamore's exactness is quite wonderful, when he pleases—he has often astonished us all."

"Bah, you spoil the antithesis!" exclaimed Maud. Then throwing a restless glance round the room as if in search of something provoking to say, she suddenly fixed her brilliant eyes on Captain Scudamore.

"How very lame you walk to-day, to be sure," she said in a pitying tone.

"Well, I thought I walked so much better than I did," said Captain Scudamore, rather mortified; for he believed implicitly what she said.

"What you *did* it is impossible to guess, you hopped, I daresay; but if you would like to see how you managed in the Creswicks' drawing-room yesterday evening, I will ring for Karl, and he shall come and turn over my music leaves. I suppose you turned over the leaves for Miss Reynolds—no, don't deny it; I trust you did not so far forget yourself as to omit so essential a duty. Oh, I don't want you to turn over *my* leaves. You may sit down again. I merely wish to hint that you walk at present just like Karl."

"How do you manage your sister?" said Captain Scudamore, turning with a smile to Alice.

"Oh, don't mind what she says, Captain Scudamore," said Alice; "she does not mean it. I assure you that I hardly recognised your step this morning."

"Hardly, I like that!" exclaimed Maud, "when——" she paused on seeing her sister's beseeching face turned towards her; "when," she added, "I heard you a mile off."

"Then it is clear you were looking out for me," retorted Captain Scudamore.

"Oh, I was," said Maud. "I wanted you to help plant the rose trees."

"By all means. I can manage to dig, I suppose."

"I don't know, but Karl will show you how; and meantime, what do you think of this fragment? Quite organ music, is it not, Alice?"

"Quite," said Alice.

"I can't see any tune in it," said Captain Scudamore.

"Now, there's a bad, revengeful disposition!" exclaimed Maud; "he is angry with me, and he vents his temper upon poor Spohr."

Maud left the piano as she spoke, and wandered about the room, uncertain how she should employ herself next.

"Shall I read to you?" asked Captain Scudamore, observing books lying open upon the table.

"Oh, dear no! don't read," exclaimed Maud, settling herself in her chair; "I always make up my mind to hear a little gossip when you come. Let us have the history of your party yesterday."

"Well, but what do you wish to hear about? The dishes there were at table?"

"Of course not!" exclaimed Maud. "Was it a large party?"

"Yes—pretty well—about twenty people."

"And who did you take into the dining-room?"

"A young lady, whose name I understood was Stapylton."

"Not Miss Reynolds?"

"Certainly not!"

"Had you a pleasant evening?"

"Very much so—I had known Mrs. Reynolds before, and therefore it was agreeable to meet her again—though I really felt awkward in beginning the conversation, since all our mutual recollections go back to the lifetime of poor Lyle."

"Did she seem to feel it?"

"Not at all; she frequently referred to the period when we were all so much together, without the least embarrassment."

"*Can* she have any feeling?" exclaimed Maud, indignantly.

"I don't know—but she is a very attractive woman—there is something so engaging in her manner. She was full of your praises."

"Ah! there she showed her taste. And did you hear Miss Reynolds sing?"

"No; I believe not—no, I don't think anybody sang except Mrs. Reynolds."



"What was Miss Reynolds doing then all the evening?"

"She was playing écarté with young Stapylton at the only time that I happened to notice her."

"Do you think her handsome?" asked Alice, timidly.

"Yes; I imagine she is good-looking," said Captain Scudamore; "but to tell you the truth, I hardly noticed her—she was not conspicuous. Mrs. Reynolds is so completely the first person in every company."

"Poor Miss Reynolds!" exclaimed Maud.

"I don't see the grievance," said Captain Scudamore; "she appears either sulky or proud; and as she does not try to please people, she need not be surprised at the success of those who do."

"Now tell me how Miss Reynolds was dressed," said Maud.

At this question, Captain Scudamore laughed so heartily that Maud started up protesting that she should go to find Karl and plant the rose trees without his assistance; and in pursuance of her threat she fetched Alice's bonnet and cloak and dressed her very quickly, rejecting all the help that he offered from time to time. He addressed himself to Alice with more success, and obtained permission to put away her work while she was preparing for her walk. She even allowed him to lead her into the garden, in spite of Maud's impatient exclamation.

"You need not make a fuss about nothing!" she cried, as he drew her sister's hand through his arm. "Alice knows her way a great deal better than you do."

When Mr. Scudamore came to meet his son, he found Maud and Karl busy planting, and Captain Scudamore walking up and down the gravel walks with Alice.

Maud was very ready with an explanation.

"Alice was chilly standing, and as for Captain Scudamore, he was only a trouble, and so she had sent him out of her way."

Mr. Scudamore was quite satisfied; but the little Lyles were not; for they had been at the end of the laurel walk, shouting and making signs every time Captain Scudamore and Alice came near them, and all in vain. Alice did not see them, and her companion did not hear them; and it was reserved for Maud, when she went down the garden, arm-in-arm with Mr. Scudamore, to catch sight of the little ones stamping with impatience, and clinging to the green gates, and begging Harley to join her voice to theirs.

Pouring out a whole volley of reproaches upon Captain Scudamore for his unaccountable deafness, Maud darted across the road in an instant, and returned with one child in her arms, and the other clinging to her dress; and in another minute Edward was careering in Karl's barrow, and Maud chasing Lucy across the lawn, while Alice and Captain Scudamore stood quietly by, and enjoyed the tumult in their own way.

*(To be continued.)*

## CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

**I**N a house where tarnished gilding and faded satin still glimmered in the long suites of rooms, and tall mirrors half curtained with dust still waited drearily to reflect bygone splendours, there was born in the little provincial town of Argentan in France, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a baby girl, who was entered in the civil register by the high-sounding names of Marie Anne Charlotte Corday d'Armont.

The family of Corday d'Armont had seen its best days as far as worldly prosperity was concerned, and the infant was wrapped in no fine lawn or costly lace; but the vigorous health and remarkable beauty of the child quickly shone out amid all her surroundings, a distinction far beyond that conferred by valenciennes or rich embroidery.

As she stepped out of babyhood, parents and friends dropped her first names "Marie Anne" when they spoke to her and of her, perhaps because there were many other "Maries" and "Annes" among her relations already, and called her always "Charlotte." The "d'Armont" was seldom used in the family for daily wear, and thus it has come to pass that the name of "Charlotte Corday" is the name by which she shall be known and remembered for all time.

M. Corday was extremely circumscribed in worldly goods and means; the family was rich in traditions and memories, among which the most dearly cherished one was that the great Corneille was counted among its ancestors; but it was extremely scantily furnished in the way of broad lands and moneyed revenues. Children came quickly trotting into the nursery of the old house at Argentan, but louis d'ors did not come in proportion to them. As years went on, M. and Madame Corday found themselves obliged to distribute a few of their numerous olive branches among some of their relations, who were not so well dowered with them. Pretty, bright little Charlotte was naturally the first child whom a relation would choose as an inmate; and who would more willingly open arms and heart to receive her than her old uncle the Abbé?

To him accordingly she was sent, and by him she was brought up for several years.

When Charlotte was playing in the good Abbé's study, the storm of the French revolution was already sullenly roaring as the sound of distant thunder in the social and political horizon of France. Its echoes penetrated, no doubt, even into the Abbé's quiet household, with its atmosphere of religious and scholarly calm, and a clever child like Charlotte was quite certain to pick up some of the words around

her and retain them, and let them sink into her mind and memory to bring forth fruit in due season.

She heard of the queen, beautiful as a celestial vision; she heard of the starving, overtaxed people; she heard of the tyranny and reckless extravagance of the nobles, she heard of the weak king, she heard of shameless vice and licence: and though she comprehended all these things at first but dimly, she made pictures of them in her brain and imagination—pictures that grew gradually in brightness, intensity, and clearness as she grew in years.

To these impressions may be added the scholarly teaching of the Abbé, which made her mistress of the Greek and Latin tongues, and his well-defined religious instructions, and we may gain a pretty accurate idea of Charlotte Corday's childhood.

Charlotte was just budding into early girlhood, when she lost her mother. Though she resided with the Abbé, frequent short visits at home had kept the child's family affections very green and sweet and tender, and she mourned for her mother in a gust of natural, youthful grief. "Happy, thrice happy," we say, as we turn away from her who lay in that open grave with husband and children sorrowing over her; for she was taken away from the evil to come.

Soon after her mother's death, Charlotte Corday was sent to the Abbaye aux Dames to be placed under the care of the Lady Superior, Madame de Belzunce, who had invited the motherless girl to come and take shelter under her wing.

There her character and mind gradually consolidated and unfolded themselves. She was often in the convent chapel in silent prayer; she was oftener still in the convent garden in solitary reverie. She read much, and read books not generally chosen by girls of her age. Her favourite volumes were Plutarch, Raynal, and Rousseau. She did not mix much in the games and amusements of her young companions in the convent school, but sat apart with her large, dreamy grey eyes, which looked as if there were untold secrets sleeping in their depths, seemingly fixed in the far distance. She did not talk, in school-girl fashion, of new dresses, or of the light gossip of the convent and its neighbourhood, but she was always talking of the days of Greece and Rome, when Greece and Rome were at their purest and best. Her girlish aspiration was that she might for once have been carried back for one brief hour to have talked face to face with Cordelia or Portia.

In the convent shades, the girl thus thought and dreamed on through some years of winter storms and golden summer suns, until she stepped into early, full-blown womanhood.

The suppression of the convents in France, and the death of her motherly friend, Madame de Belzunce, caused Charlotte Corday to be deprived of the shelter and protection under which her youth had grown up. Her beauty and sweetness of disposition, and brilliant social gifts, made her, however, a household inmate to be courted and

desired. A lady called Madame de Bretteville, a large-hearted, generous woman, who had money and position, and knew how to use them well, asked Charlotte to come and live with her ; regarding, no doubt, the beautiful, talented girl to be no small acquisition to her family. In those days of few books and no daily newspapers, a lovely young woman, who knew how to talk, was a precious possession in any country-house.

We can give a clear word-painting of Charlotte Corday at this period, as she stood under the roof of the old Gothic mansion said to have been inhabited by Madame Bretteville.

Her tall, symmetrically-moulded figure had the free grace of some beautiful wild creature : her movements were at once so swift and so easy, her finely-chiselled features had both intellect and heart printed upon them ; her delicate complexion was changeful as a morning cloud ; her eyes now glowed with feeling, now sparkled with intelligence ; her chestnut hair hung down in ringlets from beneath her high Normandy cap, and fell even to her waist.

She touched the harpsichord with a light, skilful hand, but the tones of her voice were a sweeter music still ; she had a "wondrous witching tongue" as a talker, and when she was animated about any subject, her language rose almost to eloquence. No wonder that the gallant gentlemen of fair Normandy bowed down before her, and there were frequent suitors for her hand. But she rejected them all. She said it was no time for marriage-bells to be ringing when the wounds of France were bleeding fast and deep. She said that, girl though she was, she had made up her mind to live single and to devote herself to her country. Freedom for France was her incessant prayer ; freedom for France was her incessant thought ; freedom for France was the incessant theme of her conversation.

One scene in Charlotte Corday's life at this time stands out very vividly before us, as we glance back over the troubled waves of history.

A number of guests, all of them friends and relations of Charlotte, are gathered round a dinner-table in Caen, and she is in the midst of them. The king's health is drunk, but Charlotte's glass remains untouched. Then when they ask her why, for Louis is such a good and pious king, and they are troubled and shocked at her behaviour, her sweet, clear voice rings over the table like the notes of a flute :

"He is a weak king, he does not deserve well of France ; he does nothing for his country."

While her friends are still gazing at her in mute surprise, for these bold words are strange on the lips of a girl, there is a tumultuous noise in the street outside. They run to the window, not knowing in those days of civil broils and uproar what may come next, and find that the new constitutional bishop, Fanchet, is being escorted through the town, which he has just entered for the first time, with shouts of triumph. Most of the guests at the table are royalists, and M. de

Tournélis, Charlotte's cousin and devoted admirer, who has been sitting by her, wants to lean out of the window and fling a volley of invectives upon the heads of the people. But Charlotte's hand is quickly upon his arm, holding him back, while in tones grave and queenly she rebukes him for deserving so ill of his country.

And now the terrible drama of the French revolution marched on apace. From her corner of France Charlotte Corday watched breathlessly the signs of the times, the gigantic struggle, the tumultuous confusion; and her young life grew, by degrees as it were, into the perplexed web, until it became part of it; until, woman as she was, nay, even girl as she was, she longed to take an active, foremost part in the battle, to write her name in history as a heroine who should be famous because she should help to deliver France. What she desired with all her soul was to see a sober freedom established on French soil, the land at peace and prosperous, the people happy.

At first Charlotte Corday expected great things from the revolution, but as the atrocities of the time grew more and more, as the nation groaned under the blood-stained tyranny of their rulers, she sickened at the name of Republic, for this was a worse despotism than ever yet had been painted upon the page of history. Three were the men, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, whom Charlotte Corday regarded as the tyrants of France, and upon these she centred her righteous hatred.

It was at this period, when Charlotte Corday was musing on her country's wrongs with a soul all on fire, and was panting to be up and doing something in the cause of freedom, though as yet she scarce knew what, that the discarded deputies of the Gironde arrived in Normandy. Barbaroux was the most able man among them, and Charlotte Corday became acquainted with him.

The two soon grew intimate, for freedom such as he advocated was Charlotte's dream for France, and she had long conversations with him. He painted the horrors carried on in Paris under the sacred name of freedom in glowing colours, and inflamed her spirit more and more. Then all at once her project leapt full-grown and armed from her heroic soul; she, single-handed, would deliver France by striking one decisive, daring blow. She should, no doubt, perish in the act, her own life would be sacrificed, but what cared she, so France was freed. A patriotic, Christian maiden need not fear to meet her God when she should come to Him by the portal of such a deed as this. In all time France would bless her; in all time she should live in the grateful memory of her country; that was the sort of life in which she aspired to live. Marat was the one of the detested triumvirate that enslaved the land, whom she had in the most intense abhorrence, and Marat should fall.

Charlotte Corday said nothing of her project to any of her friends; she was too generous to implicate them in it.

It is a tragic thought that irresistibly takes hold of the imagination: the thought of the girl going about her daily, common occupations,

plying her needle, attending to small household cares, and chatting with her friends over trifling events of the hour, with her stern purpose standing fixed in her mind. At this period she gave away most of her books, which were her most dearly-valued possessions, distributing them among her friends. Her relations and neighbours did not seem at the time to have attached any special meaning to her gifts, but afterwards they were no doubt cherished as dear and precious remembrances.

There is one touching little incident chronicled of her relating to those last days which she spent in her native Normandy.

Across the street, immediately opposite to the house where she lived in Caen, there dwelt a young man who was a skilful musician. It was his custom to practise on the harpsichord every morning, and each day as he played he always observed one casement of the house opposite to be gently opened, as if some one was listening to and enjoying the sweet strains. One morning he perceived that the casement remained closed. He thought little of it at the time; but he afterwards learned that that window opposite was the casement of Charlotte Corday's room, and that his music must have been her very last earthly solace.

Her project completely matured, Charlotte Corday did not linger in its execution.

She travelled from Caen to Paris under the ostensible object of looking after the interests of an old convent friend, who wanted some business done for her in the capital. What a journey must this have been for the girl, who was leaving home and friends never to behold them again; how doubly dear old memories must have been echoing in her mind, while her purpose throbbed ceaselessly in heart and brain!

Arrived at Paris, she went straight to the house of Marat. She told the porter that she had certain important communications to make to him relative to affairs in Normandy which she could disclose only to himself. In this way she gained admittance at once into his presence while he sat in his bath. A few moments after, the blow had been struck by the intrepid, self-devoted girl, and the monster had ceased to live. She was of course at once surrounded and overpowered, as she knew well that she should be, and an hour after was sitting in prison with the certainty of immediate death before her.

Trials were short and summary affairs in those days of the French Revolution. The demeanour of Charlotte Corday was most composed and dignified throughout. There was some faint talk of her advocate pleading insanity on her behalf, but she indignantly rejected it; and then La Garde, who defended her, abandoned the flimsy pretext. Her voice was clear and sweet as the flute stop of an organ whenever she spoke throughout her trial. At the end, when the judge was beginning to speak of her as an assassin, she stopped him with such a lightning flash of pride in her eyes, with such withering scorn in



her tone, that he quailed before her, and hastily broke off his speech, and left the court.

Charlotte Corday preserved her queenly beauty, her bewitching charm of voice and manner, to the last. This latter was never more apparent than when, after her trial, she thanked La Garde for the way in which he had stood by her, and asked, as a last favour to her, that he would defray her prison expenses. In her cell, after the close of her trial, a painter visited her, asking to take her picture. She granted his request in the most courteous manner, and when he parted from her, she gave him one of her long ringlets, which the executioner had just cut off, as a remembrance of her, accompanying the act with a wondrous grace such as a princess might have used in bestowing a jewel on a subject. On her way to the scaffold, Adam Luxe was so transported by the more than earthly loveliness of her face, that he cried out, "Let me die with her!"

It is said that in the middle of this century there lived in Normandy an old man named Halfilâtre, who still preserved, as the most illustrious distinction that could be conferred on a human being, the memory that Charlotte Corday had kissed him when he was a boy. It was, in truth, an honour to be jealously and proudly handed on in his family as a Frenchman; for even more than Joan of Arc is Charlotte Corday the national heroine of France, who for her country's sake willingly laid down her life.

ALICE KING.

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### COMING HOME.

"The corpse leaves with an escort for transport home."—  
*Cape Town, June 2nd, 1879.*

HOME!—with no smile upon the marble face—

He left that in the long grass where he fell;  
The cold sea bears the light form's tender grace—  
The land will greet him with a funeral bell.

Home!—seventeen death-wounds in the bare brave breast,  
On which beside lies stain'd a tress of hair;  
Can even love dare say it is not best,  
Though soldier's eyes grew wet to see him there?

The banner'd eagles over him may lie—  
The cross—the sword—wreaths wan with ocean foam;  
But he—white robed with immortality—  
Comes not by land or sea: he went straight Home.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

## LINKS AND CHAINS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF B. OULET.

WE are certainly slaves—bondsmen, fettered and tied down. Our chains hold us fast. They may be silken cords, willingly donned, or distressing ropes, only endured. They may be visible or invisible. We may kiss them, or shudder at them. All the same, they exist. I can assure you, reader, that in spite of learned treatises on freedom of thought, we cannot even think as we will. We must rather fall in with and pursue the chain of ideas suggested originally from without. Does this offend you? It does not me. I belong not to the clankers of chains, but to their worshippers. And, believe me, I have chosen the better part.

Is it not plain how the whole world is involved?—one must either fret at everything, or at nothing. The particular instance is but a link in a chain. As one cannot attain the position of a universal world-scorner, it only follows, logically, that the patient endurance of consequences is the necessary path. This is not unpleasant philosophy, this—

“Herr Oberlieutenant——”

“Thunder and lightning! have I not forbidden you to interrupt me when I am writing?”

“But this letter, Herr Oberlieutenant, has just been brought.”

“Well, lay it down, and on no pretence disturb me again.”

Is it not too grievous, when a man has weighty business on his mind, and is bending over his desk, head in left hand, following out his train of ideas—the chief thing being the very capture of these ideas—and into the midst of them a stupid servant's face is thrust—no, I should not put it thus,—rather let us say, an unconscious guardsman enters, and scatters the ideas with his snarling “Herr Oberlieutenant” and his profitless letter. Even at this distance off, I see plainly it is only from my tailor, and is wholly uninteresting. Let it lie there awhile, unread, while I resume my work. This work, as you will have already perceived, is a chapter on the enchainment of our life—a monstrous theme! I am about to publish a philosophical treatise thereon. The fact of my being Oberlieutenant makes no odds. On the contrary—Herr von Hartman, author of ‘The Philosophy of the Unknown’ was in the army. Nay, it is somehow the moving spring in the matter. I have lately left the Cavalry service, my uncle having died and left me possessor of this estate. I have resolved not to be idle, to devote myself to land business, of which I know nothing, and to supplement that by literary work.

What better use could I make of this lonely country life than the

composition of a celebrated book? Perhaps, besides fame, it may bring me in money; the means of, on the spot, despatching a satisfactory answer to this present tailor's letter; for—to say truth—my estate brings me in next to nothing, and my pension, as Ober-lieutenant, is not a large income.

But now I have strayed from my subject, our being all slaves, and tied down. It will cost me some trouble to gather my wits and return to my chapter on Chains. The simplest thing is to let alone metaphysics for the rest of the day. Herr von Hartman cannot bring his system to perfection in one twenty-four hours. Let us see what my estimable tailor has to say for himself. A closed letter always exercises a certain attraction over us. It must be opened. Amazing! I don't know this writing after all!

“Flint Castle,  
15th September.

“Frau Katharina Meier has the honour of inviting Herr Baron Ritterglas, on the evening of the 17th, to the betrothal banquet of her daughter Elsbeth with Herr Councillor Schwanberg.”

A strange invitation! If I mistake not, Frau Meier is that old fossil widow of the rich sugar merchant, who has lately bought the adjoining property. I never visited them. I knew nothing of them or that there even existed an Elsbeth Meier; and so now this fair daughter of sweetness is betrothing herself. Well, I wish her joy! I must naturally accept the invitation, and to-morrow pay a visit at Flint Castle.

A betrothal! What a chain of pictures this word calls up before the mind's eye! What will come of it? and how much happened before these two hearts found each other. I ought to marry also. I am thirty years of age; of a good old stock, and a not unpleasing exterior. Heaven forgive me! I am falling into the style of an advertisement—and—an idea!—well, why not? *Cela n'engage à rien*, and the joke will be amusing. This instant I will write and send off to the newspaper office a paragraph:

“One desiring marriage—a young man, aged thirty, of ancient race, of not unpleasant exterior,”—

But no, that sounds too vulgar! No charming woman would ever reply to it. Let us head the announcement—

#### “GAME OF CHANCE.

“In ball-rooms, street corners, seaside nooks, or at garden-parties, two hearts often meet, and why not in the columns of a paper? A young man, who has a title, intelligence, and wit, and who wishes for a wife, offering on her side youth, beauty, means and *esprit*, takes, with these lines, a ticket in the great lottery of life's happiness. All letters to be addressed ‘*Cela n'engage à rien*,’ care of Gottlieb Müller, *Times* Office.”

"Bohnslav!" (my man is a Pole).

"Herr Oberlieutenant?"

"Take this letter to the Postmaster, register and bring me a receipt."

"I will, Herr Oberlieutenant."

"How often must I bid you say Herr Baron, and not Oberlieutenant. I am not an officer now, but a man of property."

"All right, Herr Ober—Herr Baron."

"Bohnslav!"

"Your orders, Herr Baron?"

"Have you ever seen the people who own Flint Castle?"

"Yes, Herr Oberlieutenant. There is an elegant young lady there."

"Hum! Now off with you to the post!"

The letter is gone. There is a good deal of diversion before me now: the visit; the soirée; the answers to my advertisement, and perhaps some ensuing correspondence. I only fear it will all distract me a little from the composition of my book. No one would believe what depth and concentration of thought is necessary to write a treatise. I never suspected it. I am now making my first attempt. As a preliminary I have here set down some of my ideas on the entanglements of circumstances. Then shall follow my system of philosophy, and, in order to get all my thoughts well on paper (I have laid in a ream to begin with), I imagine a patient listener to whom I discourse. What I say now is just the first hasty expression of my confused meditations, intended to serve as notes for the great work. Everywhere, in the mental as in the material world, I purpose showing the principle of necessary consequences: a colossal idea! But how? Darwin has attempted something similar as regards organisation of matter; but I must throw light on it from another point, from all points of view. I must trace the chain by its links, from the first Atom to the Solar system; as regards man from Adam to my servant Bohnslav.

He says the young lady close to me is very well-looking. Why did I not become earlier aware of that important fact? One thing annoys and unfits me sadly for this work;—it is that my thoughts, in place of proceeding in regular order, take such extraordinary leaps, like young grasshoppers. If my book succeeds we must call it the 'Grasshoppers' Philosophy,' but only confidentially and amongst friends. In the literary world it must have its proper title, 'Theory of Concatenation.'

\* \* \* \* \*

This ream of paper will last me a long time. I am now only beginning on the second sheet. Since I wrote the first, six idle days have gone by. You think perhaps I lack constancy, and belong to those men who begin all and finish nothing. I will not merit your judgment; so I sit down again, deep in my task. I go on with my theme: and, indeed in these days of self-assertion, it is interesting to

observe the chains which hem us in, and well to point out proofs of their beneficial properties. What are customs, manners, laws, but chains? Only for these I might have lately said to Fraülein Elsbeth: "Most lovely of maidens, come to me and leave your Schwanberg!" She is really beautiful! I fancy her a Judith, dusky, resolute, concealing a fire within. It must be a sweet chain indeed when she untwists her dark locks, and makes of them a silken cord to bind round the neck of her beloved.

She sat opposite me at the banquet, and her cloudy eyes met mine more than once. When this happened, ever to me came the thought, "I wish I had known you earlier."

The bridegroom elect is a neat little man of at least forty-five, and therefore *certainly* twenty years older than Elsbeth. He looks to me a man able to appreciate the possession of a large fortune. The whole match is manifestly of Mamma Meier's making. I don't understand this proud, far-seeing, energetic maiden. How could she make such a loveless choice? But it is all nothing to me. In December the wedding takes place, and I am bidden to it. The mamma was sugar-sweet, and seems to cherish a mighty respect for the Ritterglas family. When I gathered this idea, I gave myself feudal airs, and told tales of the glorious lives and alliances of our ancient-day knights.

"And you are the last of your race?" suggested Frau Meier, tenderly.

"Yes, gracious lady. The house expires with me."

"How sad!" she sighed.

"Yes," quoth I, "on my coffin the old coat-of-arms will be broken, the sword of my father will sink with me into the grave, and the fame of our deeds, henceforth, will live only in the annals of history."

Frau Meier seemed so near weeping here that I hastened to add, "That is if I do not leave behind me a pair of sons." If this good woman did but know that I am not so aristocratically minded, and that it is not my ambition to read my name in armorial chronicles and genealogical trees, but rather to have some such passage as follows entered in a lexicon:—"Ritterglas, Emil, gentleman, philosopher, born 15th October, 1849, author of that incomparable work, *Theory of Concatenation*, which has laid the foundation of a new school, etc., etc."

"What now, Bohnslav?"

"The post, Herr Oberlieutenant."

"Right, so it is!" The arrival of this official is a delightful sensation, specially when one gets a good consignment. What a handful of papers, and now for the letters. This time there is no mistake about my tailor; another from my old aunt, whose birthday I honoured with congratulations, neither very interesting; and this packet? Oh, delightful! Gottlieb Müller has made it up—the answers to my advertisement—one, two, three—seven-and-twenty letters! all addressed—'*Cela n'engage à rien.*' Stand aside philosophy

—I have now no leisure for work—I must plunge into this flood of literature.

\* \* \* \*

Of all these twenty-seven letters only one has made any impression on me, and that I copy wholesale on my sheet of paper, as it certainly looks like a link in one kind of chain. The handwriting is bold, correct, neat, like that of an educated girl.

“Turning off from the dusty commonplace street, I see a leafy lane, leading mysteriously, Heaven knows where—whether to precipices or rose-gardens, none can tell. I make one step into its attractive gloominess, perhaps two, but will certainly not go far. Still, there is a magical attraction in the unusual, the undefined; and, after all, ‘*Cela n’engage à rien.*’ What increases the charm with me is that I feel like a prisoner, who for one hour succeeds in casting aside his chains, and going free; for I am surrounded by innumerable fetters of custom, education, position. I am not at liberty in any sense of the word; and therefore I rejoice doubly in my unexpected flight. I am also not happy. But I will tell nothing of my story. While I step into this by-way I wrap my personality in a thick veil. The recipient of these lines shall not know, or, I hope, ever learn, who the writer is. This shall be—perhaps—a fleeting union of souls. By the answer to this I will quickly learn whether I have to do with a soul at all. Address, A. L., Poste Restante, Vienna.”

This letter has charmed me. It impresses me like a black silk mask, behind which gleaming eyes and pearly teeth shine. Out of those orbs a spirit looks. My fancy sees it like fire and flame. Into this leafy way, wherein my unknown has stepped, I follow her gladly. As she says herself, it may lead on into the infinite and end in a garden of roses, or, better still a Heaven of love.

“Bohnslav!”

“Herr Baron?”

“A glass of cold water!”

So! and now it is time to work in earnest. Let us first get rid of all this other rubbish! Is it not true that the material with which one has ever to deal is gigantic. There are the chains of circumstances, of fate, of mountains, nations, seas, climates; also of stars and suns: call these astronomy if you will; also, and lastly, of hearts, of—Love! I will divide my work into volumes, the volumes into books, the books into parts, the parts into chapters, the chapters into paragraphs—but I plan too much! And now, to hold fast by my first idea, and then pursue it into its various ramifications! It would be melancholy if a treatise, dealing with the chains wrought out of regular links, did not, itself, pursue an unbroken regularity. She is perhaps a married woman—and unhappily married? How shall I write to her? Shall it be thus?—“You have made it difficult for me to answer you, having engaged yourself, at once, to discover if I have a soul. But what does that incomparable, indescribable thing consist



in? From the days of Plato till now, men have vainly disputed about it; and yet you would have me place it for you between the lines of a little Poste Restante letter! As for the rest, I know quite well what you mean. I can well imagine with what carefulness one must approach your fine little soul, wrapped in its thick veil; lest, perchance, it should take wings and fly away. What a pity I am not a poet! Perhaps then I might clothe my tremors in words tinged with the perfume of the essence in which your syllables are wrapped, and so meet you midway. But I am no poet. I must therefore only give you a simple assurance that I am worthy of your confidence, my fair unknown one. My word as a gentleman on that. Before all else, in due honour to your mask, it is my duty to introduce myself to you in all openness. My name is Emil, Baron Ritterglas, and I live on my own property. Moreover, you are at liberty to inquire, as you will, into my personal likings, my character, my circumstances; all nearer details which it may please you to demand. I know not, and you yourself seem not to realise, the object or end of this episode. You follow after the indefinite, and wait for the unexpected. I, lady, on the other hand, owe you the confession that my advertisement was not the result of any well-considered plan, but, on the impulse of a moment, as a frolic, was sent out into the world. But this does not hinder that I, like any other young bachelor, would indeed rejoice to get, as my wife, some fair, *spirituelle*, rich young maiden. You can easily comprehend all that. So much concerning my insertion. Yet, if you will, we can leave all that to one side, and regard as the starting point of our correspondence, your letter, which opens into a way with no appointed end. You say you are not happy, not free. I know not what *rôle* I should assume. Shall I endeavour to make you happy and free; or merely try to comfort and afford you some distraction? On my side I am free, so far as a man can be, for it is my judgment that we all, more or less, wear fetters; but no family ties bind me; no State duties; no bonds of love; my time, my heart, or—if it must be—my life is at your service. I remember, truly, one binding thing—I am writing a great book."

It seems to me at this moment that a new interest of this sort is likely to interfere with this work, and with the orderly marshalling of my ideas. I will, however, at once despatch this letter, and then go for a ride. I have written quite enough for one day.

\* \* \* \*

This is my third sheet. Eight weeks without working! If I go on at this rate my book will be ten years on hand. But how can I busy myself in metaphysics when I am so engrossed in this charming correspondence with my lovely Diana. That is how she signs all her letters. I look for the postman with feverish impatience, and then spend hours answering her letters. I believe I have, in this space of time, sent some three hundred sheets to that Poste Restante—whole memoirs! Her letters, also, are ever more lengthy and numerous. I

think that in these five-and-twenty octavo sheets, which I am happy enough to possess in her writing, she has told me all she has felt or thought of in her life, without, in the meantime, betraying any of her outer existence or circumstances. What a brilliant wit, what glowing fancy, what deep feelings she is mistress of! I am in love—yes, a simple raving lunatic for love of her. It does me good to set the fact down in this little set formula. All you indifferent poor folk, envy me. Not for a million of money would I exchange with you. Oh, Diana! Diana!

She has sent me her photograph, yet I don't know if she is beautiful—for the picture does not show her features. The composition of the study is in itself a coquettish poem. The surroundings of the figure do not comprise the usual pillar and landscape in the background with which we are all so familiar in our albums. There is a broad staircase, down which a lady, dressed in full ball toilette, comes. One hand is on the baluster, with the other she holds to her face a large bouquet of roses. She is inhaling their perfume so busily that her brow and eyelids are alone visible. From the nosegay a broad ribbon hangs, on the ends of which the words '*Cela n'engage à rien*' are legible. One dainty foot is seen to the front, while, on the steps, behind, the train of her dress is disposed. Whatever her face may be, her figure is perfect, from the graceful slope of her neck, the round of her full arm, of her tapering waist, to her slender ankle. There is, besides, an indefinite grace and elegance diffused over the whole. Even if the concealed features are insignificant, this lady must be altogether charming. As yet I have no idea whatever as to who she is. I have never attempted to spy upon her concealments. I have not inquired at any of the photographers in the city, nor at the house where her letters go. Oh, no! I will not hunt her down. The name of the artist is rubbed off the back of the picture, and, of course, it gives a great clue. But hitherto I have felt no curiosity concerning the name and condition of my correspondent. The very mystery enhances the charm. Moreover, I seem to cherish a hope that some day she will lift her face out of that bouquet and send me a rose. Just now, however, I am beginning to torment myself with questions. Shall I write boldly and say I love her? I must. I cannot help myself. "Diana, even at the risk, which, since I had your first note, has haunted me, of frightening away my dream lady, I must now venture to step from the world of fancy into reality. I love you, Diana; how could it be otherwise? Within the close lines of five-and-twenty sheets of writing paper you have enclosed all the charms of your nature. This alone is enough to have entangled my heart; but, besides this, you have somewhat lifted the veil from your own feelings, and have allowed me to see their depth. And then your picture! I see half your fairness and guess at much more Dearest, most lovely of women, be mine, will you not?"

"If you are not quite free, some chains can be unriveted; but if

this may not be, oh terrible thought! If your portrait, your letters even, are a fiction, let all this knot of confusion cease. It is better so. I am now resolved to search you out, and either shall tear your veil from you, and find—(maddening thought) my dream lady gone, or I shall see my hidden beloved, and say to her in person, as I now do on paper—Diana, I love!”

Yes, this day I send off a decisive letter; and in three days an answer may—must—be in my hands. How can I kill the dragging time till then? As to my treatise, I can't bear to think of it. A lover who dissertates on common feelings and philosophises must have much resemblance to a galvanised frog lecturing on muscular movement. Away with abstractions! It is all subjective and objective with me now. Diana! Diana! How will your answer read?

\* \* \* \* \*

As I have written here the above question, I must also enter the answer. Besides, it gives me a renewed pleasure to copy this letter, already so many times read:—

“Your tumultuous epistle, Monsieur Emil, has quite terrified me but though I still tremble a little, my alarm is not altogether unpleasant. It is what we call agreeable nervous excitement. You must know, with all my acquaintance, through poets and romancists, of woman's so-called supremest bliss, I have hitherto never felt even a premonition of the imagined sentiment. Now, first, M. Emil, in this throng of correspondence, the dream-figure steps forth for me too into reality, and I tremble and smile together. But, my most honourable of correspondents, do not search me out. I am resolved to drop the mask myself when the right time comes; and you need not fear I shall disappear, or prove a myth. The photograph is my likeness. The letters were written out of the depths of my inner consciousness, and each word is but a mirror of my mind. On my side I do not doubt your uprightness. I recognised that in your first letter, as well as your worth, and intellectuality, and sensibility; they are all displayed in your succeeding sheets. Your little scheme of turning philosopher, however, dear sir, is all vain—a harmless vanity. What you are by nature meant for is, a sensible, honourable, thoughtful man, who ought to be happy.

“Do you know that your neighbour, Count Saalfeld, is about, in a few days, to assemble a large harvest gathering of friends? Your whole country-side goes to his house then, and also many visitors from Vienna are invited. And now listen. I, too, make one of this party. Emil, will you recognise your Diana? I give you no key to the riddle; I shall carry no token on my person. I shall enjoy seeing your searching glances passing from one to another of us ladies. I warn you, and demand of you, not to make any closer inquiry, for I will of my own accord reveal myself. This is my last letter—that is, at any rate, the last of the series—*Cela n'engage à rien*. After we have

met, if I write to you ever again, it must run '*Cela engagerait à tout.*' But, M. Emil, shall I indeed find you worthy of that ? DIANA."

I cannot confide to these pages even an idea of the tumult of delight into which I have been plunged at the thought of this coming blissful meeting. One thing I, however, can express, namely, that for no reward would I now exchange with any man living. Yesterday, when I received Saalfeld's invitation, I put it aside with indifference, saying to myself, "Well, it will afford me some diversion, perhaps, to go, as I am in such a bad working humour." I little dreamed of the magical charmed circle into which the prosaic card would give me admittance. It lies here now, close to Diana's last letter, and I view it tenderly. As we are bidden to sporting amusements, a pair of deer, a game-bag and gun, are drawn on it. The designs should be allegorical figures, angels, masks, and the keys of Paradise. Expectation of coming happiness is reckoned one of our greatest earthly enjoyments. In this pleasure I am now wrapped with powerful intensity, beyond even the blessedness of the child waiting for its Christmas presents, or of the theatre-lover watching for the curtain to rise, and present his highest ideal of art.

Oh, when I think that within these next few white sheets of my portfolio the unfolding of my whole little romance will soon be entered ! For I pledge myself to put down the result of this momentous visit. Indulgent sympathiser with all my fine theories, you shall at once learn the continuation of this chain, whose first links you have seen begun. All shall be told, to the smallest particular, even if the tale be one of vexation. If you are minded to laugh at me, do so. I am at present so wholly contented with my own lot that the shafts of ridicule seem harmless. The much-to-be-envied philosopher of links and chains is at your mercy ; he puts himself there.

\* \* \* \* \*

I now redeem the promise I have made. I will give no hint as to the humour in which I commence again to write. Astonished, reader, though you may be at my tranquillity, it nevertheless exists.

When I awoke, however, on the morning of Saalfeld's first festivities, a thrill of delight penetrated me throughout as my waking mind realised that to-day I should at last, in the flesh, see my Diana, the mysterious and charming unknown.

The covers were about a mile from Saalfeld's castle. We were invited first to breakfast, and after the hunt a great dinner-party was to take place. I was in the saddle, booted and spurred, by nine. My trusty Bohoslav (in every tale of this sort a trusty servant is introduced, I think, on which account my Pole comes in usefully ; but of his trustiness I have really had little or no experience) had already been despatched with my portmanteau of toilette necessities.

After an hour's ride I reached my destination. Saalfeld came forward to greet me.

"Ah, Ritterglas, I began to think you would not come. It is ages since we have seen you either here or at any of the neighbouring covers. What has been the matter? Were you ill?"

"I? Ill? No, thank you. Have you many guests here? Ladies?"

"Oh, yes—a house full! Ladies also. But now it is time to think of breakfast. You will see enough of the ladies to-night."

"What ladies have you here? Tell me their names, like a good fellow. What do they look like, and where have they come from?"

"What zeal! I know nothing of them at all, Ritterglas. Heaven knows I couldn't tell you about even one of them! You ought to know our usual circle, and do, I suppose. My sister does all the honours for the ladies, and invites whom she will. I only trouble myself about the sport and the male guests."

After breakfast we immediately started on our shooting expedition. Now, in ordinary times, although no great Nimrod ever, yet I am a respectable shot; but on this occasion I was covered with shame amongst my companions. My thoughts were so busy elsewhere that I saw no hares, much less shot any; although this day witnessed the slaughter of about five hundred. Once only was I roused to interest during the hours devoted to sport. Some one near me cried out mockingly, "It is evident, Herr Baron von Ritterglas, that you are no worshipper of Diana!" I gazed in dumb surprise at the speaker. "Diana? Diana? How? You know her then? and she has worshippers? Perhaps you are one of them. What about her? Say out all you can!"

"I must beg of you, sir, to keep your gun from such close proximity to me!"

"Ten thousand pardons! But what of Diana?"

"Come, I don't see why you should be so excited! Unless you are Actæon, who was in love with the goddess, you need not be so jealous of her name being used!"

"Oh, is that all? Hum!"

"Fall back into your position, pray, Baron; we have no time for conversation in the midst of such splendid sport."

Towards six o'clock we all trooped into the Castle. My trusty Bohnslav awaited me in the chamber appointed for my use, and had all things in readiness for my evening toilette. The question as to whether I should appear in civil attire or in military uniform had exercised me much. I had decided for the former—as I believed the simple evening dinner dress would be most acceptable to Diana; because it is a distinction in itself to wear this with becomingness. I have, besides, never quite realised my rank as Oberlieutenant; although, but for my philosophic turn, I might have served on, and received my company.

A bright fire burned in my grate; warm water smoked on the washstand; my evening suit lay spread out on the bed; and, in the

mirror-stand, four lighted wax-candles were placed. On the table before the sofa lay a tea-pot, cup and saucer, sugar-bowl, and rum flask. The heavy curtains had been drawn before the window, and, after tramping through the moist, dark November night, it was inconceivably pleasant to enter this charming, warm room. It wanted as yet an hour of the dinner-gong. After dressing, I took a stretch on the couch, until the first clang sounded through the house. I instantly sprang to my feet, put a last touch to my neck-tie, and left the place. I was up in the second story, and to reach the reception-rooms had to traverse long, luxuriously carpeted corridors and stair-cases, adorned, at intervals, on each side with statues and pictures. All these details of beauty made a deep impression on me. When the mind is highly strung upon any subject, the externals of such thrilling times can never be forgotten. Thus I now observed everything. I entered the drawing-room with a beating heart, and a long-drawn breath, receiving a fresh impression of pleasure from the scene of pomp, beauty and sweetness before me. Some twelve or fifteen ladies, with as many gentlemen, were already assembled, and were dispersed in various groups throughout the gorgeous salon, gay with gilding and glasses and damask hangings in high art shades. I had to draw aside for another person to enter—a lady who rustled past me; beautiful and most elegantly dressed. Was this, perhaps, Diana?

Count Saalfeld and his sister stood together, near the fireplace. Thither I carried my greetings. The lady, a stiff, elderly dame, reached me her hand, with the query: "I trust you have had successful sport, dear Baron?" Happily the entrance of a new set of guests, to whom she had to turn, saved me from being obliged to answer.

I now glanced round at the other ladies present. There were many pretty girls, and also several more advanced in life, and rather insignificant-looking; none amongst them all in the least corresponded in appearance with my ideal Diana. The fair individual who had entered the room with me now stood in the alcove near the window with her back towards me.

That I decided must be she, and I turned to Saalfeld. "Will you introduce me to a few ladies?" I said.

"Gladly: are they all strangers to you?"

"Yes. Who is that near the window?"

"Hey! Take care of her—she is a most alarming coquette!"

"How so? Tell me a little more of her."

"Well! Firstly, she is a Pole; and they are all flirts."

"Is she married?"

"Divorced, or something of that sort, see? Do you not know those ladies coming in now?"

"Oh! Frau Katherine Meier and her daughter," I said.

You are acquainted with them then! They are very near neighbours of ours, and though my sister is very exclusive, I persuaded



her to send an invitation to Flint Castle," Saalfeld explained in an apologetic manner; "and certainly the Fraulein is wonderfully handsome."

"Then I suppose Herr Schwanberg is also amongst your guests? But pray introduce me to the beautiful Pole."

Frau Meier was now close to us, and I bowed my greetings, but she held out her hand with a smile.

"Ah, Herr Baron! I am glad to meet some one I know," she exclaimed. At this instant the door opened and dinner was announced. Saalfeld motioned to me, and I was, of course, constrained to give my arm to my neighbour. I found myself, presently, placed between her and another elderly lady. The fair Pole was quite at the opposite end of the table and, as I am rather near-sighted, I saw little of her features; but perceived that she glanced towards me often. Fraulein Elsbeth Meier was just across the hospitable board, and well in my view. When I greeted her she gave me back a smiling salutation. "Happy Schwanberg!" I mentally exclaimed, and this reminded me to say to her mother, "Is not your future son-in-law here to-night, gnädige Frau?"

"My future son-in-law? Oh! Have you not heard that is all at an end?"

"Indeed! I am very sorry. This is the first I have heard of it."

"Oh! There is nothing to be sorry about! It is much better as things are, I fancy. He was too old for Elsbeth, and she did not love him. Before they were quite a month betrothed she suddenly declared she would not marry him. Letters, presents, and ring were all sent back, at once."

I heard all this with very scattered attention, as I was covertly watching every movement of the interesting Pole. In spite of my short sight I perceived that she was in lively talk with an officer on her left hand. "Perhaps I would have done better to wear my uniform," I meditated, while I tried to answer my too talkative companion. "Yes, it is sad enough this, no doubt. It must have troubled you a good deal!"

"Troubled! Quite the contrary. The match was a good one, certainly, as Schwanberg is a sort of millionaire; but then we have had good luck of late: about a fortnight after she had dismissed her bridegroom, she came in for a most unexpected fortune of two millions of marks left her by an uncle, her father's brother; so she is now richer than all her brothers together are."

"Why! is not Fraulein Elsbeth then your only daughter?"

"Only daughter, yes; but I have three sons by my first marriage, to whom Flint Castle and all my property must go. Before this good luck Elsbeth's dower was very modest indeed, and Schwanberg would have been a brilliant match; but *now* she is the richest heiress in this part of the country, and has every right to look higher; even perhaps to a Count. It is just as well, if one can, to have a pretty

coat-of-arms and a coronet; and, if my daughter were a Countess, perhaps this proud old lady, our hostess, would be less condescending to me to whom she makes believe her invitation for to-day was quite a wonderful favour!"

This chatter was frightfully uninteresting to me, but I had to bear it until dinner was over. Then I again, as soon as ever we were all re-assembled in the drawing-room, begged of Saalfeld to introduce me to the Pole. He took me into the smoking-room: three or four ladies who were not shy of the cigars were here seated on the low Eastern couches amongst a crowd of gentlemen. Half sitting, half lying, my Pole was placed amongst the cushions of a small sofa, her foot (it must be the very foot which the photograph displays) a little extended beneath the hem of her dress.

"Will you allow me to introduce my friend, Baron Ritterglas, to you, Madame de Bowrowska," Saalfeld said, retiring as he spoke.

I sat down beside the lady, who reached me her hand with a gracious smile. Her features were not regular, but had much of the expression and animation such as usually distinguish her country-women. Her eyes were full of fire; her brow, which was now covered with curled hair, might easily have been that shown in the picture, and yet I thought it more commonplace than my Diana's. I could not compare her arm and neck with my mental pattern, as both were concealed from view by her costume, but the hand seemed much like my ideal's, and, above all, the dainty little foot. The figure, too, was elegant and pretty. No doubt this was she; and yet—and yet—I felt a certain sense of disenchantment. The reality answered not to my dreams. She spoke first.

"Were you fortunate at the sport?" (Always the same query).

"Diana was my one idea," I said.

"Really! So passionate a sportsman! And how many hares have you killed?"

"Is a poor sportsman then to have no thoughts for anything but hares and such animals?" I exclaimed.

"You told me yourself your whole mind was on the game."

"Diana, I know you," I half whispered.

"What?" she replied, as though not having caught my meaning.

I could not repeat my remark, as some other gentlemen came into the room, and the conversation became general. Madame de Bowrowska displayed much merry wit; and used her sparkling eyes continually. I am not sure to whom she gave the preference, but I know many glances fell on me. "A coquette!" I murmured; "Saalfeld was right *there*, at any rate."

I returned to the other room, and resolved to talk with every woman present, lest I might possibly be mistaken in believing this lady to be my correspondent.

I made the acquaintance of three young countesses, sisters reared in the "Sacré Cœur," and the chief attractions of the last Carnival

season. Their conversation ranged only upon the Court and on Society balls, and was bristling with blue-blooded pride of descent. Diana could not be one of those. A certain spiritual Frau von Hochfels, no longer young, yet very charming, made me hesitate a moment; but when I glanced at her unlovely hand I knew I was again on the wrong track. During my round of inquiry I came upon Fraülein Elsbeth. Certainly she carried off the palm of beauty in the assemblage; many young gentlemen surrounded her, attracted as much, perhaps, by her recently-acquired fortune as by her personal merits. I mingled in this group, but the centre of it was cold, *dis-trait*, and silent. This, at any rate, is no soulful being, I mentally exclaimed; and, after exchanging a few difficult sentences I was once more continuing my investigations when I received a severe shock. Saalfeld's fifty-year-old sister, upon whose chin a more than incipient downy adornment was visible, called me to her side.

"Do you play whist, Baron?" she inquired, with much friendliness.

"I don't know one card from another, gracious lady."

"Oh, I don't intend to tie you down to a game. You might just as well confess to some knowledge; *Cela n'engage à rien.*"

When I heard these words a cold shiver ran down my back. "Diana, are you there?" I whispered, trembling. But the lady gazed at me, in such evident astonishment, that I at once perceived, with unspeakable relief, her remark had not been weighted with any deep significance. Thus I went from one to another, but always was persuaded that in none present could I find, nay, or even wish to find, Diana. We had music, conversation and cards. Not before midnight was the programme for the next day's pleasuring propounded. After breakfast we were to hunt, as before, and in the evening a masked ball was to wind up the festivities. The ladies were challenged to mystify us gentlemen, if they could. Thus we separated—our hostess saying, as we bade her good-night, that she hoped we would all find good entertainment to-morrow night, as she expected a large assemblage. "This house will be very full, as many guests come for this costume ball from Vienna."

My heart beat tumultuously as I ascended to my room. I felt my half-vanished hopes revive and my joyful expectations return. "Perhaps Diana will only arrive to-morrow," I murmured to myself, blissfully.

Madame de Bowrowska accompanied us in our sporting expedition next day, in an elegant hunting costume, carrying a pretty gun over her shoulder. She was very coquettish with me, and looked charming. I was again almost certain this must be Diana; yet, to all my allusions to our long correspondence, she assumed total ignorance of my meaning. We were not, however, long by ourselves, as the interesting Pole was besieged with attentions. On this occasion I redeemed my character as a sportsman, and massacred

as many birds as possible, knowing that I was watched by such a fascinating lady. I once more pumped Saalfeld concerning her history.

"Yes," he said, "she is beautiful, but treacherous; and not a good woman in any sense of the word. I advise you to give her a wide berth. She made her husband miserable; and then, of her own will, separated from him; she knows how to lead her worshippers on, and then laughs at their sentimentalities. Are you aware that, in a duel fought on her account, an excellent young man lost his life, and Madame danced next night at the Embassy Ball?"

These stories of Saalfeld made me very uncomfortable; but, then, as I said to myself, "Women are often misjudged. If she is the author of all those letters, I know her better than the world can."

As night fell we returned to the Castle; and while I rested in my comfortable room, I endeavoured to bring my mind into a composed state with the aid of mingled meditation and tea. "Ritterglas," I said to myself, "my good fellow, you have been too eager about grasping an ideal happiness. At the best this thing can only bring you a *bonne fortune*, not the blessing you want; a divorced coquettish woman can never content your heart. You should have kept at your work, in place of writing advertisements. But, after all—who knows?—perhaps Diana is yet to come. She may arrive during the next two hours, to dinner, or, later still, to the ball." So musing, I heard the door open. "What do you want, Bohoslav? It is still too early to dress."

"A chambermaid gave me this for the Herr Baron," my trusty servant said, laying a small parcel before me. It was a box. I lifted the cover, and found a buttonhole bouquet—a rosebud lying on damp moss—and a note with the words, "A greeting from Diana."

The well-known writing impressed me like the sight of a lost, believed-in, and recovered friend's face. In an instant my dream-woman returned and filled my mind, of late so distracted by Madame de Bowrowska. By-and by, wearing my flower, I entered the drawing-room as excited as on the previous day, and certain now that Diana was here. The company was much more numerous, and there were many pretty women I had never seen before; and yet there was no time for making their acquaintance, as dinner was shortly announced. I was again Frau Meier's neighbour, and I fear my conversation was not very edifying. She examined me as to my favourite occupations, and also concerning my coat-of-arms. Naturally, if questioned on my employments, I think of my philosophic studies, and feel I ought to explain I am not only a student, but aim at founding a new school. True, Diana, when she heard this, called my authorship a harmless pastime; but women do not understand such things. I have a dim recollection that in my answers I mixed up philosophy and shields in a wondrous manner. Frau Meier certainly shook her head in an

astonished way at times. I may have told her my armorial bearings consisted of links and chains, and that my book would contain many lances and some oblique chevrons.

On this occasion we gentlemen remained at table, English fashion, after the ladies, who left us earlier than usual to prepare for the masked and fancy ball. Perhaps an hour or more passed before we were all reunited. Even our hostess, together with all the mothers and aunts present, wore dominos. The younger ladies were in every variety of costume such as could be hastily devised, for the whole thing was a somewhat impromptu affair.

I knew now that my hour was come ; now or never would Diana approach and reveal herself. I had scarcely thought this when a majestic and elegant veiled woman drew near. She wore a rich satin domino, which fell about her in graceful drapery, and in her hand she carried a nosegay of roses. I stepped forward and met her. "Diana !" I whispered.

She placed a trembling hand on my arm, and stood beside me silently. Her hand was not gloved, but lay as white as snow on my sleeve, and was the same, with its exquisite tapering fingers, which in the photograph leaned upon the balusters.

"Diana, Diana," I repeated, "say only one word to me !"

"Yes, I am Diana, Baron Emil." The answer was rather breathed than spoken, and the lady trembled visibly. I was myself so agitated that I could not say more. I led her out of the thronged room, through a number of gay apartments, until we at length found ourselves alone in a small cabinet, richly adorned with rare plants and flowers.

Near the hearth were two arm-chairs. Diana took her hand from my arm, sat down in one, and motioned me into the other. We were silent for a little, and awkward. She presently roused herself, as it were, and put her little satin-covered foot on the fender.

"Diana," I said at last, "we are alone here ; let me see you."

She shook her head. "Not yet," she whispered unsteadily.

"You seem afraid of me. Have you lost your confidence," I said—"the trust you breathed in your letters? Do you withdraw from myself the sympathy your letters gave me?"

She shook her head again. "No, it is not that," she murmured. "But, do you see, the meeting of our souls in that imaginary lane, which enticed me onwards into our strange correspondence, is now transformed into the ordinary intercourse of a lady and gentleman by a common-place fireside ; and now the whole singularity—I must say unseemliness—of our letters has overwhelmed me, and I feel ashamed—almost miserable. If I speak to you any further, I must retain my disguise. Behind it I feel some shelter—something like the cover of a letter. It is the only remnant of mysticism left in our friendship."

"Friendship, Diana? On my side I have ventured to write of love !"

"Baron Emil, you know not who I am, nor how I look!"

"I know more than that," I interrupted. "What is a name, a face, in comparison with such thoughtfulness, such spirituality as speak in your dear letters?"

"And you, Baron, are so well known to me, in the same manner. I showed you all my heart; but, like Juliet in the Balcony scene, I feel my cheeks burn; and, like her, I thank the night, which hides my blushes—I thank my disguise."

I caught her hand, which breathed to me a perfume of violets, such as her letters always bore, and I lifted it to my lips: "And, like Romeo, I swear thou shalt ever be the mistress of my heart!"

At the magic and familiar word "thou," she started, and withdrew her hand quickly.

"You are too impetuous, Baron; you swear too early: you do not even know if I am free."

"You should remember, you went surety for that, Diana, when you wrote the words '*Cela engagerait à tout!*' My highest wish is—is, Heaven grant you are unmarried! It was a marriage advertisement began this, you know, and I am ready, and anxious, for home treasures and joys!"

"But you stipulated for riches!"

"Good Heavens! I value the poetry of luxury as well as any one; but if the girl of my heart has not a farthing, and is content to share my modest home, I shall be the happiest of men. As to the rest, I can earn money—"

"And how?" asked Diana.

"You know—my literary proclivities; I told you of them. When my '*Philosophy*' reaches the eighth edition——"

Here a silvery laugh rang through the room.

"Who laughs uncovers," I exclaimed; "Diana, say a gracious word to me—give me a hope!"

"Whilst I am concealed, I must say one earnest sentence, Baron Ritterglas. I thank you from my heart for proposing to an unknown individual: but perhaps you have hunted me down! Do you know who I am?"

"On my honour, I do not!"

"Then I thank you," she continued, "and I give you my answer. I know *you*, and that you are an honourable man: and—pardon me—no philosopher; rather a poet. Yes, by your letters you opened a new world to me. I was buried in my own conceits and book knowledge; I fancied myself a genius: and I felt very unhappy in my circumstances. I despaired of ever seeing my ideal; and thus your correspondence brought me into a new circle. I came in contact with a soul beyond my own in power; and with a heart as warm as my own, filled with love to man and reverence for God. Then came your letter, saying, '*Diana, I love you;*' and—then——"

"And then—say on, Diana—your words are music!"



"I ceased to feel unhappy, Baron Ritterglas—I became happy—oh so happy!"

Oh, that I could fall on my knees and kiss the hand she reached me! But this was impossible; the room door opened, and Saalfeld entered.

"Ha! here we have a little comedy in progress!—and it is nearly time to put off dominos. I want you all to assemble in the ball-room!"

At the first sound of disturbance, Diana had escaped to the window, where she now stood. Saalfeld came close to me and whispered: "You seem to be intent on courtship; but I advise you to keep yourself free of entanglements. I have a project on hand for you—that beautiful Elsbeth Meier—what do you think of it? Two millions of marks! My sister thought it out first."

"Unfortunately, my heart is not free!"

Diana approached, and emboldened by her affection, whispered softly, "I beg your pardon, but I have heard what you said."

"Then you know my answer; my heart is not free."

"Fair domino, it is you who have fettered this gentleman's heart," Saalfeld said, bowing to her.

"Yes, it is I, and I take possession of it," she replied, slowly dropping her disguise as she spoke. She stood before me, a lovely vision. "Elsbeth!" I cried.

"What mischief have I been at, I wonder?" sighed the Count.

"*Cela n'engage à rien*," laughed the lady.

"*Cela engage à tout*," I answered.

Saalfeld shook his head. "I don't understand a word of it," he exclaimed.

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To-morrow is our wedding-day. I have laid aside my Philosophy. We, my Elsbeth and I, spend the winter in Rome; and, in the spring, intend to take possession of our newly-purchased estate. Then I resume my work; and you must confess that I have the best reason to be content with my theories. A chain of ideas, arising out of my own wisdom, led me, through a concatenation of circumstances, into the blindest of all enchainments—union with a beloved woman. I have every right to honour Links and Chains! I believe still in my philosophical work; and, that on its completion, I shall be one of the most honoured of writers. The main point to consider, as I have before remarked, is, how to proceed after a well-arranged plan, advancing in regular order.

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## OF USING WHAT WE HAVE.

A WISE man has said that most of the failures of life are caused by pulling up the steed just when he is jumping. No doubt some failures are so caused ; and these are the failures of men who have had a good start. Boldness forsakes them just at the point where it is most needed ; calmness gives place to excitement, and firm grasp to trembling hands. The good old poet meant to give warning against this possibility when he wrote the fine lines :

" He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dare not put it to the touch,  
To win or lose it all."

But many more fail where the few succeed, simply because they are above *using what they have*.

This is the evil which present-day education and present-day class prejudice do so much to foster. The sons dislike the idea of beginning at the point where the fathers began, and would *start* at the top of the ladder ; forgetting that he who would succeed in any department of life must work his way up from the lowest rung, step by step.

And then gentility does so much mischief—clerkships and such positions are run after, but handicrafts are regarded as almost degrading ; and idleness and luxurious habits are regarded as the infallible marks of the "gentleman."

With the result that our sons aim at what they are not fit for, and will not use what they have.

Germans, Dutchmen, Belgians, and Americans even, come in and fill up the vacant places, and young Englishmen in crowds are compelled to go to Australia or Canada, or New Zealand, there to undertake far more menial labour than might have sufficed to carry them into good positions at home had they been but content and wise enough to use what they had.

Proverbial lore might have taught and warned. There is a good Scotch proverb which says : " He that uses what he has will never want ; " and another, which has its fellow in English : " Dinna pour awa' your dirty water till you've got clean." Emerson sets the same truth in his forcible style when he says : " We must fetch the pump with dirty water if clean cannot be had." To the same purpose the sententious and thoughtful Thomas Fuller : " The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general who does not make use of what he knows."

Our young men of the class we have spoken of act in direct defiance of the saw : " Handle your tools without mittens," and expect to compete with foreigners, who have not been so indifferent to the

principles of success as they have been. "Dinna dry the burn because it may wat your feet," is a Scotch saying which here comes to the mind with a fine feeling of practical applicability. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"—even in the Australian bush, where not a few Englishmen have gone to seek fortune by pathways that they had despised to walk on at home, when they had the chance; and another Scotch proverb rises to the mind as especially appropriate: "A layin' hen is better than a standing mill."

With admirable discrimination, too, the Scotch follow up this proverb by another to this effect: "A gude calf is better than a calf o' a gude kind." In "The Successful Merchant" we find this apothegm aptly illustrated: "Poor circumstances are like poor relations—if you try to deny them they will humble you; if you take kindly to them you will raise them up."

Indeed, in some respects, it is an advantage to be compelled to *do without*—to "use what we have," and feel that we are doing it. There is no pleasure equal to the sense of triumph in this way. No credit to the man who has everything in his favour, and never feels the lack of instruments. Repletion of these may numb or never call out the inventive instinct. Perhaps it was this Zoroaster meant when he aptly said: "Only the light-armed arrive at the summit."

There is a very good Tuscan proverb—and all the Tuscan proverbs are very incisive and direct: "Though all cannot live on the piazza, every one may feel the sun;" and there is another admirable proverb to the same effect from a very different nationality, the Swiss: "The goat must browse where he is tied." But better still, perhaps, as a parting word of wisdom, is the couplet of Goethe:

"Wer sich nicht nach der Decke streckt  
Dem bleiben die Fusse unbedeckt."

"He who does not stretch himself according to the coverlet will find his feet uncovered."

A. H. JAPP, LL.D



## THE MOSQUES OF CAIRO.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, AUTHOR OF "THROUGH HOLLAND,"  
"LETTERS FROM MAJORCA," ETC. ETC.



TEST PILLARS : MOSQUE OF AMROU.

WE turned away from the Mosque of Hassan and the Place Roumeleh, with its motley crowd, its camels, its busy air of excitement. Apparently a great trade was going on, but in reality very little was being done beyond conversation. The citadel looked down upon it all, as if altogether above the meanness and traffic of the world. On the highest point of the rock, the dome and minarets of the Mosque of Mohamet Ali, outlined against the clear sky in serene repose, seemed a silent reproof to all who were too much concerned with the cares and riches of life.

We were surrounded by every Oriental sight and sound. All European influence had been left in the regions of the hotels and public gardens—the new quarter of the town. There was nothing in our immediate neighbourhood to break the Eastern charm. Mosques with their cupolas and minarets overshadowed us; we had only to raise our eyes to fall under their charm. The Tombs of the Caliphs were so near that all the previous night's moonlight fascination swept over us like a returning wave. Not far off were the cemeteries where the dead reposed in a grandeur and solemnity only surpassed by the Caliph mausoleums.

The crowded and lively streets were full of the allurements of Oriental life. All the different people of Cairo were represented, the modern Egyptians in stronger force. Turks and Levantines, Armenians and Jews, Copts and Mohammedans mingled their turbans and their flowing abbas, whilst here and there a dervish stood out in conical-shaped hat and ample cloak. All seemed intent on business, and there was much good-tempered hustling and elbowing. But we never saw any unseemly quarrelling in Cairo, as we had occasionally seen in other Oriental cities, where flashing eyes and angry voices and drawn daggers are too common an experience to excite the least apprehension: symptoms of murder and bloodshed generally ending in nothing. They occur in broad daylight and are open and above board. Unlike the impulsive anger of the Italian, the secret vendetta of the Corsican, there is no taking your enemy unawares and using the assassin's knife in the dark.

All the houses about us were Oriental. We were out of the region of the shops for the moment, and a quieter element reigned. The lower parts of the houses were plain, frequently without window, whilst the entrance door—often Moorish and artistic in style—was well closed. Above, were beautiful mushrabeeyeh casements, the uppermost generally devoted to the harem. Behind many of these no doubt bright eyes were looking down upon the busy scenes, enjoying them all the more that they were forbidden pleasures; for the human heart, inconsistent and full of unsatisfied desires, longs for the unattainable.

"We are bound for the Mosque of Kalaoon," said Osman; "but on our way let me show you an interior to which I have a privileged *entrée*."

As he spoke, the carriage drew up at a house of no outward pretension. The lower portion, apart from the entrance, was a dead wall, but the mushrabeeyeh windows above stood out picturesquely. At our summons the door was quickly opened, and we passed through a narrow passage into a magnificent courtyard adorned with palms and Eastern shrubs, growing in the centre. Outward plainness and simplicity in contradistinction to internal richness and magnificence has been handed down from the days of the despotic Mamelukes, when property and the sanctity of home were never safe. In those days it was often only too necessary to conceal all evidences of wealth from the outer world. The danger has passed, but the custom remains and is good.

Osman inquired for the Sheykh or master of the house, and was told that he was in his harem.

"Disturb him not," replied Osman. "This simply means," turning to us, "that he has withdrawn for the moment from the world, and is enjoying himself in the bosom of his family. His wives and children are probably around him, and he is making much of them, and they of him. In spite of a plurality of wives, and much

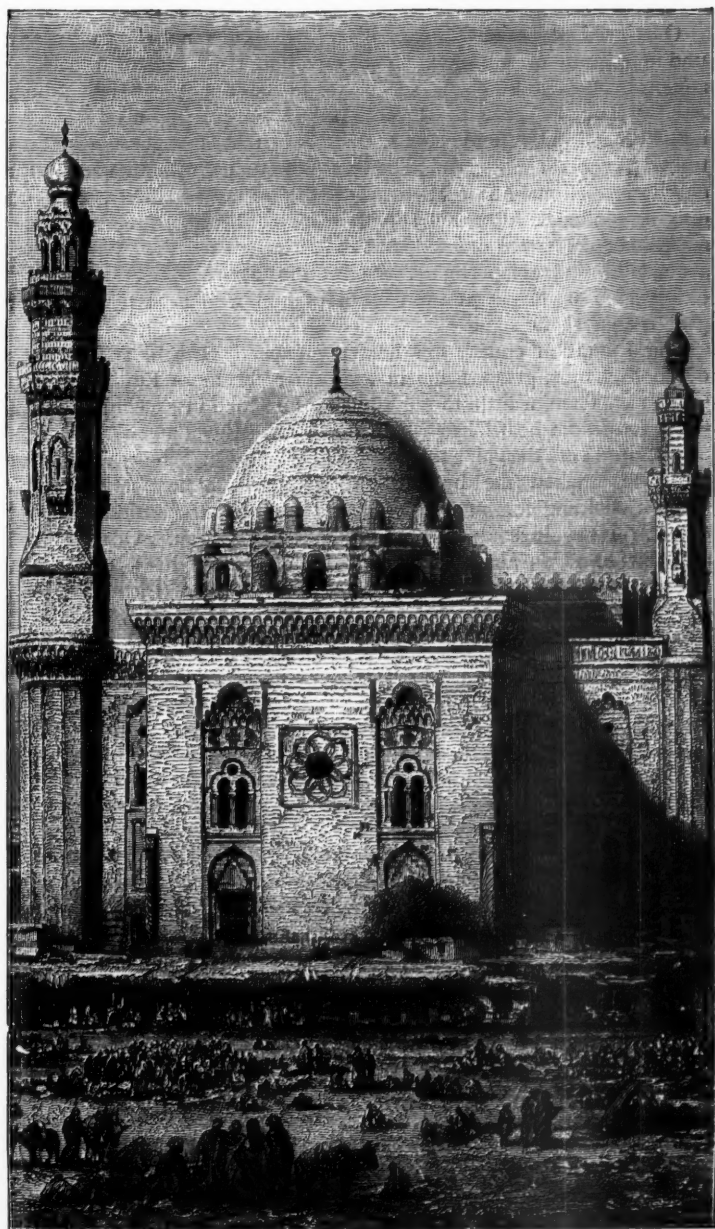
one would like to see altered and reformed, a great idea of the sanctity of home exists in the modern Egyptian: the stronger perhaps that he reigns supreme and alone in the harem. Naturally he is the idol of his wives, for upon him depend their happiness, their luxuries and indulgences; whilst the facile law of divorce makes them careful to cultivate the charms of amiability, and avoid offence. Amongst the best and highest classes divorces are infrequent. When the master is in the harem he does not like to be disturbed: such a reply is equivalent to your 'Not at home.' As far as we are concerned to-day, it does not matter; I can come and go here as I please. If the Sheykh knew of our visit, he would hasten to us; but we will not intrude upon him."

We were in an old Mameluke palace, and everything was of magnificent proportions. The open hall was large and imposing. Above the balustrade rose rare and ancient columns, supporting fine horse-shoe arches decorated with arabesques and other curious designs in rich but subdued colours. Seats and divans stood about, whilst two or three turbaned attendants kept watch and ward, recognising us with a deep Oriental salutation, but taking no further notice of our approach. This hall looked on to the courtyard, with its palms and mushrabeeyeh windows, all open to the blue sky. An Oriental screen of superb workmanship divided it from the chambers beyond. A fine dado of various coloured marbles lined the lower part of the walls. The ceiling was magnificently painted.

From this we passed into the reception kiosk, a splendid apartment richly decorated. The floor was paved with delicate marbles, upon which here and there Oriental rugs were thrown; and the lofty ceiling was exquisitely carved, painted, and gilded. Arabesque decorations on the walls almost rivalled the beauties of the Alhambra. The room was almost bare of furniture, and seemed only the more effective and imposing: nothing small or trivial arrested the eye. Windows large and deep, had their recesses fitted up with soft luxurious couches, suggestive of repose. The highest panes, of coloured glass, threw a rich glow upon the room. Wide and lofty proportions made it stately and dignified in the extreme; an effect which no doubt had a corresponding influence upon the minds of those who habitually dwelt there.

As we were looking and admiring, and Osman was pointing out certain subtle and artistic beauties, we heard an approaching footstep. Turning, the master of the house stood before us—a venerable sheykh of some seventy years, but of firm and upright bearing. His turban allowed a little of his hair to be seen; it was white as snow, yet his eye was keen and piercing as that of youth. It seemed that he might go on to four-score years, and still the labour and sorrow of age would be far off. The face was of the highest type, calm and magnificent; a face that might have sat for Abraham. It was full of intellect, and his massive brow seemed a very temple of thought.





PLACE ROUMELEH, AND MOSQUE OF HASSAN.

Overjoyed at seeing Osman, his pleasure was not shown by any undue warmth of welcome. The Egyptian temperament, especially amongst the highest class, seems to forbid any great unbending. Approaching, he gave the Eastern salutation, placing his fingers to his forehead, lips, and breast, meaning that his guest dwelt in thought, word, and heart. Then turning to us, without waiting for any introduction, he went through the same ceremony, and we duly responded. After this, slightly clapping his hands, an attendant appeared; coffee was ordered, and the attendant retired. We thought again of the 'Arabian Nights,' where things and people appeared and disappeared by magic, at the control of him who held the lamp, or gave the cabalistic sign.

Our salutation ended, our host approached Osman, and holding out both hands, grasped his in a manner far more European than Oriental. Then, a little to our surprise, he spoke in excellent English—we so seldom heard English spoken by the Egyptians.

"A bird of the air told me of your visit," he said; "but the bird reached me by accident. I could almost upbraid you for not sending for me, only that I know your consideration for others. I should so have regretted not seeing you. Our meetings are now so rare—and you dwell so much in my heart and mind. Ah, those happy days, when I was your father's chief friend, and you as a child sat upon my knee, and the hours were golden because I thought that youth would be everlasting! Your father was to go long before me, but for me he lives again in his son."

His voice was deep and penetrating, yet soft and clear; his tones were measured; he possessed the high-bred air which belongs only to those whose surroundings have been courtly and elevated. Osman in a few words introduced us, and explained that on our way to the Mosques, he had stopped to show us his remarkable house.

"You are indeed welcome," gravely responded our host. "Your visit confers an honour upon me. Would that I could give you more extended hospitality. Dinner to-night, or——"

But this our engagements compelled us to decline. Speaking, we had approached the centre of the room, and stood where the marble floor was sunk to a depth of about six inches, and a circumference of some twelve feet, the lower section paved with a fine mosaic. But so spacious was the room that the hollow seemed lost within it. As we looked, suddenly a fountain threw up its perfumed waters, and the cool plash of the falling spray sent forth a delightful echo. Almost at the same moment, a "slave of the lamp" brought in coffee, which was served in the usual small cups reposing in their exquisite filigree holders. Our host conducted us to the raised end of the room, the Leewan, or place of honour. Here small rich carpets were thrown upon the floor, and the recesses were filled up with seductive cushions. And here we sat and drank our Egyptian coffee in true Egyptian form. It was essentially a room for reception, not for ordinary



INTERIOR OF A HOUSE.

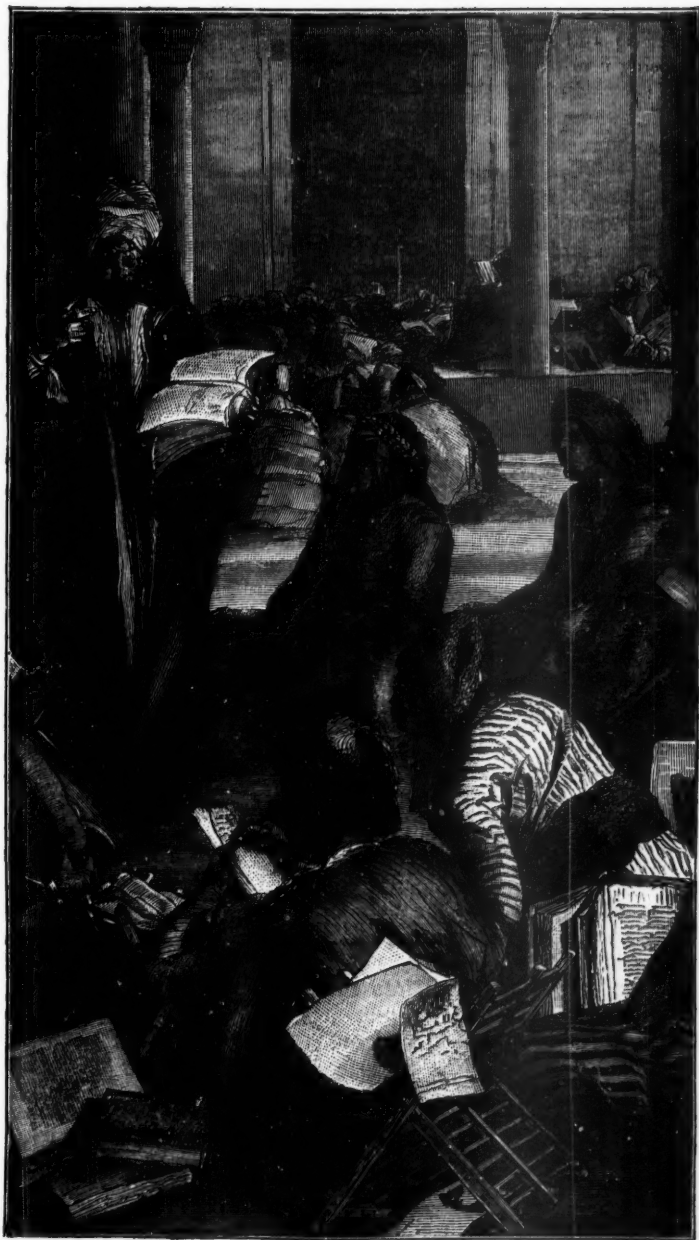
habitation. There was a great deal of exquisite carving about the walls, and brackets held rare ornaments, but the accommodation for sitting or siesta was limited.

"I am broad-minded enough to wish that I could show you even my harem," said our host, with a grave smile, "for as strangers it would be a new experience to you. But that is impossible. The very word itself, as you no doubt know, means the forbidden, or the unapproachable. Even my friend Osman, who for his father's sake no less than for his own, is dear as a son to me, has never been admitted within those sacred walls. And I can imagine the terror of the inmates if I so far forgot myself as to introduce you. Our Eastern customs are peculiar in your eyes, no doubt, but believe me, the ladies of the harem are not unhappy, and I think that if a change of life and habits were put to the vote by the women of Egypt, it would not be carried. They have many enjoyments, many luxuries, few wishes ungratified, and in their own domain absolute freedom. Their outdoor liberty is restricted, but the human heart, with its wonderful power of adaptation, soon ceases to wish for the unattainable."

We had much to see and do, and soon had to bid our host farewell. He conducted us with grave dignity to his very threshold, and there took leave, commending himself to our remembrance and begging for a repetition of the visit: a pleasure to ourselves, as it turned out, not to be fulfilled.

"He is a man in ten thousand," said Osman, as we rattled through the thoroughfares, "as you will have discovered even in our short interview. My father had the highest opinion of his wisdom and integrity. Though never a member of the political world, or anything but what in England you would call a 'private gentleman,' many time my father sought his counsel and followed his advice. He was perhaps the only man ever so honoured, for my father was more accustomed to make laws and assert his own opinions than allow others in the least degree to influence him."

We were bound for the Mosque of Kalaoon, and were steering northward. To reach it, we purposely made a détour to pass through the bazaars, the carriage setting us down at the principal entrance gate, and going round to meet us. Within the large portal, built by El-Ghoree, was of course a motley crowd of Egyptians and Europeans, many of the latter on donkeys, and of the ordinary tourist type. The bazaar was even more thronged than usual, for it was a market day, and things were being sold by auction; the dellâls struggling through the market, and calling out the sum offered for a particular article, endeavouring to get higher bid. The articles were of the usual description; swords and slippers, rich embroideries, soft and flowing silks and Eastern carpets, silver daggers massively sheathed, each possessing a history and a pedigree, all mingling their charms and puzzling the judgment of an admiring purchaser. Amidst this *embarras de richesses*, the tourist hardly knows



STUDENTS : MOSQUE OF EL-AZHAR.

which to add to his collection of curiosities, and often ends in choosing unwisely.

We passed out of this into the bazaar or market of the copper-smiths, where a great deal of fine and really artistic brass-work was to be seen. Much of it was hand-wrought and *repoussé*. And here, in this market-place, almost side by side, we found the Mosques of Kalaoon, Barkook and En-Nasr, outrivalling each other.

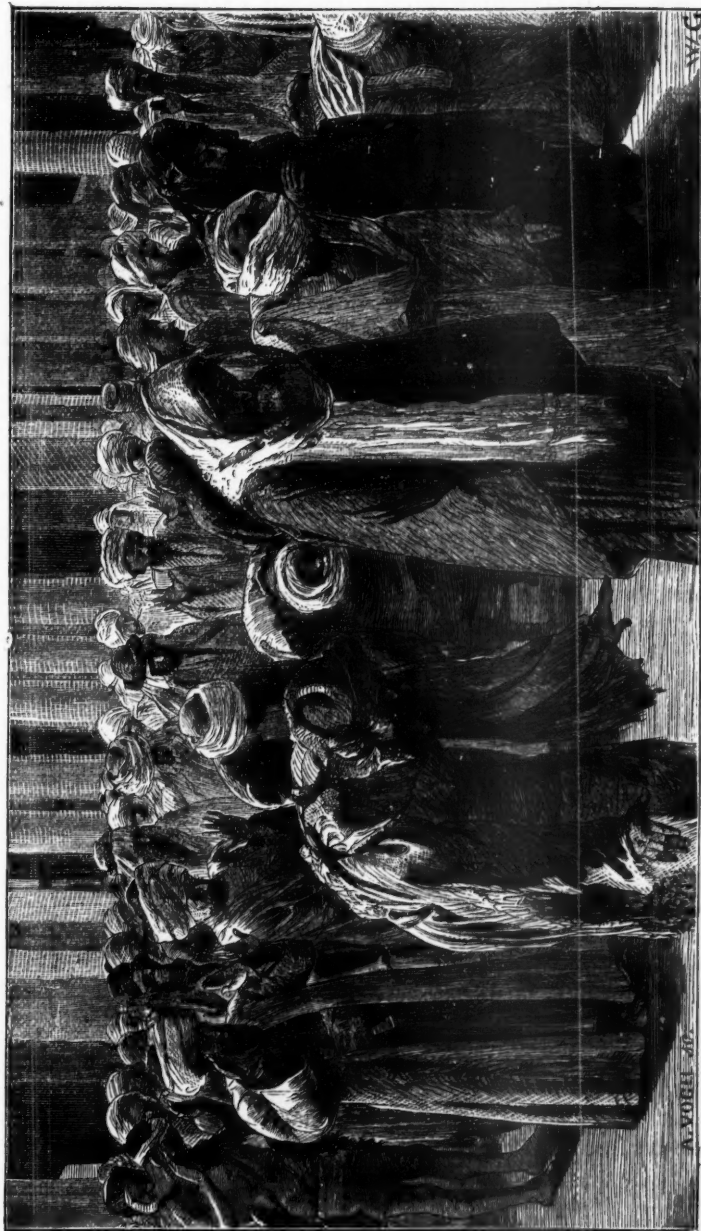
The Mosque of Sultan Kalaoon was founded in 1287. There are two mosques of that name, one being a mausoleum, and they formed part of the once celebrated and prosperous *Muristân*, the *Bethlehem* and hospital built by Kalaoon. These are two of the most interesting mosques in Cairo, though a certain gloomy, creepy, poverty-stricken air hangs about them, arising perhaps more from the people who visit the mosques than from the buildings themselves. In point of fact, the Mosque of Kalaoon is one of the most richly endowed. But the passage leading to the mosques is long, narrow and ill-conditioned, and they are in painfully close quarters. The market-place is crowded with booths, buyers and sellers; a great noise is frequently going on; no atmosphere of stateliness and repose surrounds them as it surrounds so many of the mosques of Cairo. It is all very unromantic, yet one of the best pictures of Eastern life to be found in this Eastern city.

The market-place is thronged; the wonderful hat of the European mingling ludicrously with the close-fitting, picturesque turban of the Egyptian. Donkeys are in great force, and the air is full of sounds that are certainly not melody; the shrill cry of the donkey-boy joining in with the harsh rasp of the copper merchant. The latter tries to raise his voice above his neighbour's, assuring you of the superiority of his wares. He is often right. You are more sure of your purchase in the copper market than in almost any other bazaar.

The gold and silversmiths are close by. Their wares are more costly, but not always as genuine as those of the copper market. Yet their filigree work is often exquisite, and is sold by weight, a very small charge being made for the wonderful hand-work. At each end of the copper market is a narrow street, through which the crowds constantly come and go in slow-moving streams.

Out of all this you turn into the narrow passage leading to the Mosque of Kalaoon: passing at once into comparative solitude. But the people you see are not often interesting: sick folk for the most part, frequenting the Mosque of Kalaoon for its life-giving, sickness-healing reputation. Into this we also passed somewhat carefully, for the atmosphere was not altogether ethereal. With the exception of the mosque itself, there was a hospital air about the place, suggestive of fever and disease, of rooms close and dark and confined, sufficient in themselves to breed malaria. The immense building is going to ruin and destruction. Cells once occupied by lunatics are now in possession of the coppersmiths, who here make





THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

A. VOORN - 56.

W.C.

their beautiful work, not in the least influenced by the thought of all the madness and delirium which the old walls witnessed in days gone by.

Sultan Kalaoon was originally a Mameluke slave of extraordinary beauty, and is said to have been sold by the merchant who brought him from Turkestan for 1000 dinars. He began his reign in 1279 and died in 1290: having in eleven years become great and popular. Kalaoon was of the Baharite Mameluke dynasty, and one of the best of his race. His victories were numerous. He defeated the troublesome and powerful Mongolians, and recaptured Damascus, the loss of which had so affected the Egyptians. He triumphed in the Crusades, and succeeded in almost every undertaking. During his reign wars were constantly going on, yet the country prospered. He was unscrupulous in obtaining his ends, considering all things fair in war, yet he never neglected the welfare of the people. He was learned in the art of medicine, and did everything in his power to advance the science and alleviate suffering. The Muristân which he founded was one of the largest and most complete institutions the world has seen. Few monarchs have left a more benevolent record of their reign behind them. There was a separate ward for every known disease, and the number of officials employed was enormous. A large lecture hall was attached to the building, which was always crowded with students. The origin of the hospital is said to have been a thank-offering on the part of Kalaoon. During his Syrian conquests he was taken dangerously ill at Damascus, was nursed and cured in the hospital, and vowed to found a similar one on his return to Cairo. The existing hospitals were small and insufficient, and Kalaoon built his upon new and magnificent lines, in a manner worthy of his promise.

The high walls of the mosque are imposing, with their alternately red and white lines. The minaret at the north-east corner is very fine, but a little too massive in construction. It is therefore less graceful than many of the minarets of Cairo, and seems to have been built rather to defy time than with any great regard to beauty and refinement. With due care the buildings might have lasted many an age yet to come; but neglected, they are fast going to ruin and decay. The old kitchen, which is still worth visiting, formed, as it were, the centre of the immense buildings, and round it all the numerous wards radiated. This kitchen was an important part of the charity, and several officials were employed solely in the task of choosing its provisions.

The minaret to which we have referred is formed by a base of three squares one above the other, unequal in diameter, with an octagonal terrace, surmounted by a cylindrical drum sculptured in fine arabesques, with a second circular terrace above. The whole is crowned by an *ovoid*, in the form of an egg, upon which gleams the crescent.

Out of the crowd and confusion of the market-place we passed into a new world when we entered the mosque. The proportions struck one at once as being large, lofty, and imposing. It was divided by six pillars in double rows of three, supporting pointed arches of great beauty. The capitals were beautifully finished and ornamented with divided leaves finely sculptured in imitation of the Corinthian capitals found in Roman buildings. The pillars are painted green, the capitals yellow, a startling effect happily subdued by the well-toned light. The side columns of the kibleh support a magnificent horseshoe arch; the kibleh itself being ornamented with rows of graceful colonnettes, fine arabesques and gilded mosaic.

The tomb-chamber is in far better preservation than the rest of the buildings. The tomb itself is protected by a screen of carved wood. Around this are four massive piers and four granite pillars supporting an octagonal superstructure with pointed arches. The catafalque is simple in form, and near it rests a large urn elevated on an inverted pyramid. In the room is preserved a silk shawl and a leathern belt worn by the Sultan, supposed to cure diseases.

The pillars of the prayer niche are also supposed to be miraculous, and are the constant resort of invalids. Mothers here bring their children for their tongues to be "loosened." The charm consists in squeezing a lemon upon a large stone in the chamber near one of the windows. This is rubbed with a smaller stone, and as soon as it turns red with the action of the acid, the unhappy infant is made to suck the stone, with the result that its voice, if not its tongue, is loosened with great effect.

At certain times women visit the prayer niche and implore that their wishes may be granted or their diseases cured. Suddenly a woman may be seen to divest herself of her outer garments and begin to dance and jump vigorously from side to side until at length she falls to the ground, prostrate and unconscious. The windows of the mausoleum have very fine and delicate tracery, and in form are very Romanesque. The lower part of the walls was covered with mosaics in marble.

Next to the Mosque of Kalaoon comes the Mosque of En-Nasr, with its marble portal of clustered pillars and its pointed Gothic arch, the only example of the kind in Cairo. This mosque was brought from Acre, after its destruction, by El-Ashraf as a trophy of victory. The interior is not interesting excepting for its very fine Arabian stucco-work, and the beautiful tracery adorning the arch above the Kibleh though it is built very much on the lines of the Mosque of Hassan II.

The third and last Mosque, that of Barkook, is also uninteresting, excepting its black and white marble portal and bronze door. It was built at the close of the fourteenth century, at a moment when architecture was not occupying very much attention in Egypt.

The wife of Barkook reposes in the tomb-chamber, and also his daughter, Fatmeh : death, indeed, in the midst of life : none of the solemn silence and mystery of the tombs of the Caliphs : none of the majesty of the Pyramids : yet what many would prefer as a last resting-place. As we know, Barkook himself reposes amidst the Caliph tombs in a mausoleum that has scarcely its equal. The minarets of the mosque in the copper-market are painted red and white, like those of En-Nasr and Kalaoon. !

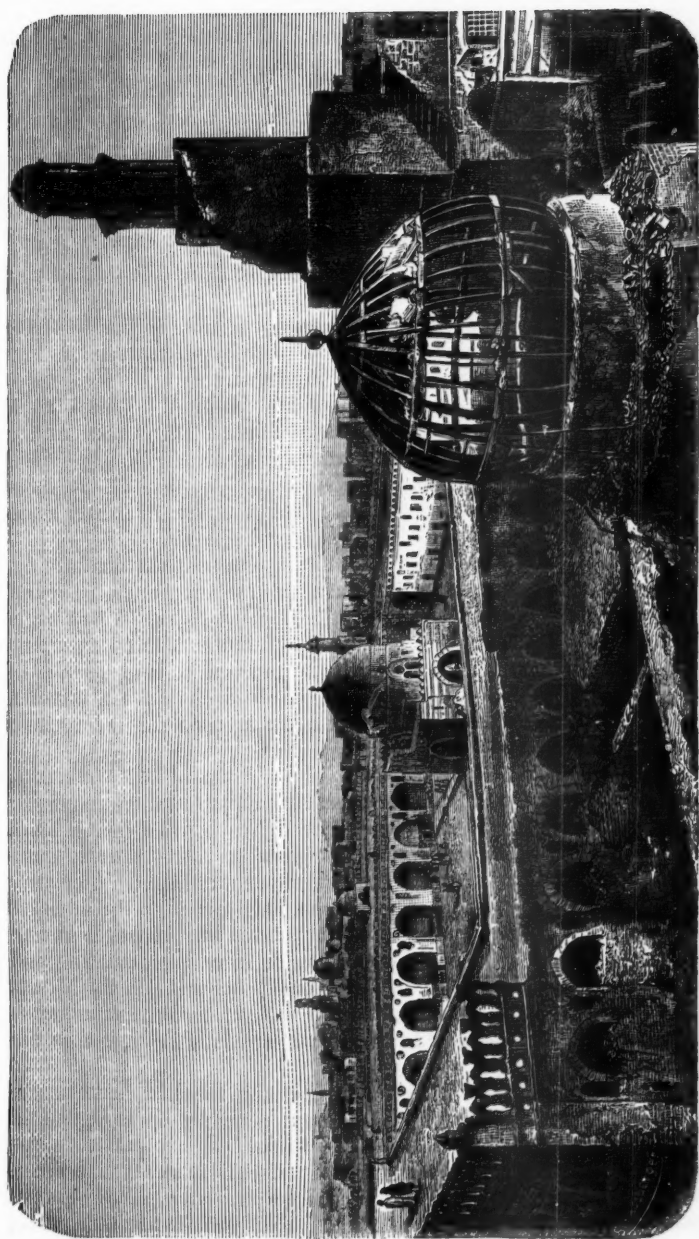
Leaving this immediate neighbourhood, where mosques crowd upon each other, in a very few minutes we found ourselves at the Mosque of El-Azhar. It is called "the splendid Mosque," but is so surrounded by houses that very little of the exterior can be seen, beyond its six minarets. This mosque was first built in the year 970, but nothing of the original remains. The mosque has six gates : the Soup Gate, the Gate of the Upper Egyptians, the Syrian Gate, the Gate of the West Africans, the Gate Gohariyeh and the Gate of the Barbers : the latter so called because within it many students may be seen undergoing the process of head-shaving.

The court is immense, but yet larger is the sanctuary, with its three hundred and eighty columns divided into nine ranges, amongst which one feels almost lost. It is full of repose and a subdued light. More than twelve hundred lamps are suspended from the low ceiling, but it was not our good fortune to see it lighted up. The effect must be very imposing. The pillars are of marble, porphyry, and granite, and many of the bases and capitals were taken for the purpose from ancient Roman buildings.

The great court has no fountain, which is replaced by cisterns for the necessary washing before worship. The surrounding colonnades support very high brick walls of immense weight, covered with a thick layer of plaster of enormous strength and hardness, and ornamented with stucco-work. Here, under the colonnades and in the court, on mattings, poor Mussulmans are allowed to repose during the night.

Attached to the mosque is the largest and most important university in the East, with a staff of over three hundred professors and some ten thousand students.

More striking than the vastness of the building, the countless columns, is the sight of innumerable students, sitting upon the ground in groups, learning and reciting their lessons. Heads sway to and fro in all directions, and a murmur fills the air, professors are standing up in cap and gown, laying down the law, giving instruction to those who listen open mouthed. Some of the students look interested and intelligent, others are dull and heavy, and, it is easy to see, will never become brilliant lights. Every nation and sect has its particular quarter, every quarter its inspector ; above all is the general administrator, called the Sheykh El-Azhar. Here will be a section all Turks there all Syrians, and so on : whilst one section is given up wholly to teaching the blind.



RUINED MOSQUE OF TOOLOON.

The education is comprehensive and both primary and secondary. Grammar, algebra, arithmetic, logic, philosophy, and theology are all taught. Mohammedan religion and law are taught according to the four different rites of the Sunnees: the Shafeite, the Malakite, the Hanafite and the Hambalite. Of these the Shafeites are the most numerous, the Hambalites very much in the minority. Many of the students are very poor. To these is made a distribution of bread every other day, and a certain amount of oil for the "student's lamp:" the "midnight oil" we all are too fond of burning. Besides this, a small monthly sum is given to each poor student, just sufficient to enable him to supply his most pressing needs.

The yearly expenses of the university amount to six hundred thousand piastres, a portion of which is paid by Government. The remainder is made up chiefly from endowments.

Of all the different sects, the blind are the most fanatical, as if want of vision produced narrowness of mind. The professors are scarcely paid, and have to support themselves chiefly by giving private lessons, or filling some religious office. The wealthier students also make them frequent presents. The Sheykh El-Azhar alone receives a stipend, amounting to ten thousand piastres.

The professors teach standing, or sitting cross-legged on matting, their book before them reposing on a desk. The pupils sit round him in a circle, and, as he reads, take copious notes. They begin their education by learning the Arabic grammar. From this they pass on to religious science; and then proceed to the science of religious and secular law. Much attention is given to logic, rhetoric, and poetry. Elocution is also taught so far as concerns the reciting of the Koran.

The students remain three, four, or six years at the University, and have to pass examinations in all the subjects before receiving a diploma. Their intellectual work never rises above a certain level. They accept their knowledge as it is given to them, without questioning, without enlightened or original thought: there is no creative power even amongst their professors, who, having risen to the foremost places, might be supposed to be far above the average. Great learning many of them do possess, but it is very mechanical, and leads to no higher results, no new departure. Scientific, in the highest sense, they are not. Natural history, geometry, algebra, astronomy—these branches are neglected. Yet it was specially in these that the Ancient Arabs excelled.

Their lectures are delivered in a sing-song tone, in itself monotonous and uninspiring. The professor generally leans against a pillar, or sits on a mat close to the pillars, an equivalent to the professor's chair of our Western universities. The students take notes, providing themselves with *Kuras* for the purpose—ten pieces of paper fastened together; and they write with a reed pen, laying their Kura on the palm of the left hand. During the intervals from study, the



courts of the mosque become lively with conversation. The students group themselves about. The water-seller comes in with his metal cups and curious skin. Pedlars are trying to drive bargains; visitors are freely admitted, and amongst them may here and there be seen a woman, closely veiled. At midday the muezzin is suddenly heard summoning the faithful, and all hasten to the open court and the cisterns, where the slight but prescribed washing is gone through, preparatory to the midday prayer. All bow the head towards the Kiblah, and for a time silence reigns.

Learning is one of the first conditions of the Islam creed; just as the certainty of Retribution is one of its canons. "A man must know everything, and remain ignorant of nothing," is one of their sayings. "Learn magic, but do not practise it," is another; which appears almost an equivalent to the more beautiful and perfect words of our Lord: "Be ye wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." "Men are either learners or learned, and he who belongs to neither class is good for nothing," is an ancient Arabian proverb. Whilst over the principal gate of El-Azhar, the Gate of the Barbers, are the words: "Actions shall be judged by their motives, and every man shall be rewarded according to the motives of his heart."

The professors set a good example. They are badly paid, in some cases not paid at all, and the very spirit of their work is an earnest desire to do good. "Fakree, Fahree" is their motto: "My poverty is my pride;" and very poor and very contented are they for the most part. Their students come from and return to all parts of the Islam<sup>1</sup> world: from the Coast of Morocco on the one side to the Islands of the Indian Archipelago on the other; and within the vast walls of El-Azhar is acquired a great part of the learning which goes far to keeping alive the traditions of Mohammedanism.

This visit to the Mosque-University of El-Azhar is one of the most interesting experiences of Cairo. Hours, nay days, may be spent here by those who understand the language, who care to listen to the various lectures, and watch the intellectual processes. It is a study of character, and probably in no assemblage in the world could be found so great a variety of types and intelligence; so strange a contradiction of opinions and sects, yet all having the same end and aim. In one way we might imitate them with advantage: there is no schism amongst them. Side by side will stand two professors, their voices mingling, themselves excellent friends; yet one—metaphorically—will be telling his pupils that the road to be taken is on the right, the other that it lies to the left.

More picturesque but less interesting than El-Azhar, was the Mosque of El-Ghoree. It stands out in a broader thoroughfare, and its high walls are very imposing. Opposite to it is the mosque of the same name, which was once a Sebel and Medreseh, or seat of learning. Few spots in Cairo are more picturesque. The lofty walls facing each other are magnificent, very harmonious in effect, and

between them moves an ever restless crowd in every variety of dress. Driving becomes almost impossible.

The mosque on the west side is of great beauty and charm. The interior is planned very much after that of Kaitbey; possibly because El-Ghoree had once been a slave to the Sultan Kaitbey; and may have had happy recollections of his youth, or of his present exalted position in comparison with his youth, which he thus wished to memorialise.

El-Ghoree was upwards of sixty when he ascended the throne, and was still full of life and energy. His reign of fifteen years was one of constant action, of many reforms and improvements. He was a great lover of splendour, and surrounded himself with every mark of wealth, everything that was great and gorgeous. He possessed the finest stud of horses; the richest collections of precious gems; his dinner service was of pure gold; and he greatly patronised poetry and the fine arts. Of music he was an especial lover. At the same time he was not popular. In order to carry out his numerous reforms: building fortifications, mosques, and schools, constructing roads and canals: he laid burdens upon the people which they were ill-fitted to bear. In this matter he became tyrannical. This, in conjunction with the discovery of the Cape route to India by the Portuguese, to the great injury of the trade of Egypt, brought sorrow upon the country.

Still El-Ghoree went on reigning more or less brilliantly, until, whilst fighting against the army of Selim I., that terrible sultan of the Ottomans, on the Plains of Dabik, he fell down in a fit of apoplexy, and was slain by his followers.

The mosque he built is worthy of his love of grandeur. The inlaid floors are magnificent, and the roof is richly decorated. The walls are covered with arabesques and broad bands of red Cufic inscription. The various marbles used in decoration are rare and beautiful. None of the original splendour remains, but the colours and gilding must have been very gorgeous. Here and there on the sculptured arches traces may still be found, from which one may faintly imagine the effect of its early magnificence.

In none of the mosques bearing his name does the body of El-Ghoree repose. After his death his head was decapitated and sent as a trophy to Selim I.

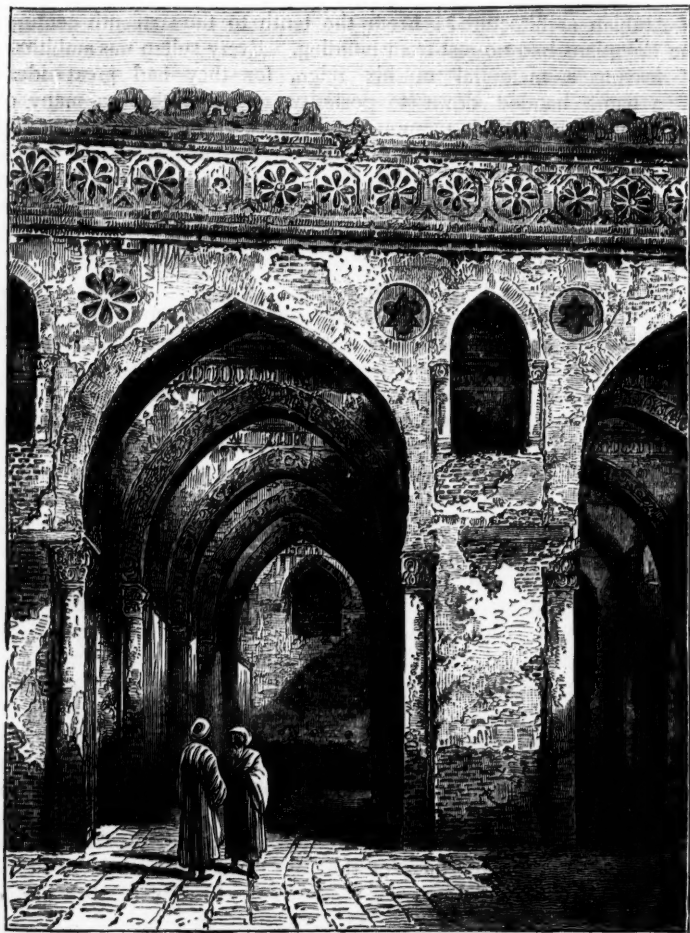
Scarcely less interesting was the ever-moving crowd passing between these magnificent and majestic walls, which though built nearly four hundred years ago seem but of yesterday. Every variety of costume was there; it was sufficiently lively for and almost resembled a carnival. The poor water-carrier had hard work to make way with his water-skin, and his clanking cups had to be silent. Nowhere did we see a more truly Oriental scene, or one that so completely made us feel in Eastern climes. Only Cairo, with its wonderful possibilities, could present such an *ensemble*: at once crowded and varied, full of life and movement, majestic in its surroundings.

"We will now visit the oldest mosque in Cairo—the Mosque of Tooloon," said Osman. "It is one of the most interesting, both from its size and antiquity. The most ancient of all is of course that of Amer or Amrou, in *Old Cairo*. But they are all wonderful, these mosques! Where will you find so many magnificent religious buildings crowding upon each other, and all possessing the singular charm of Arabian architecture? From the tenth to the sixteenth century, the Egyptians had no rest from building. Every sultan was ambitious of leaving a memorial of his reign, for they had great ideas of a name handed down to posterity. Strange that so many of them should have been tyrants and despots, given up to everything that was evil. All possessed elements of greatness, but could not be true to their better nature. Nowhere," he continued, "was Arabian art brought to such excellence as in Cairo. The great examples to be found elsewhere are few and far between. But the day will come when even in Cairo few traces will remain of this grand school, which appeals so much to the imagination."

"With all its grandeur, it is always one and the same school," we remarked. "This almost seems to mark a want of creative power in the architects of the past."

"Rather they were restrained by Mohammedan influence," returned Osman, "always a great enemy to independent and original thought. But there are three types of mosques, and they are very distinct, though I admit that each succeeding type was a progression rather than a new creation. The earliest type was characterised by its large open court, its arcades and roofed colonnades, by rows of columns supporting pointed arches. Such is the Mosque of Amer. Succeeding types were more gorgeous, more full of detail, never more simply and grandly beautiful and imposing. The second type made its courts smaller; the refined and beautiful arcades—which somewhat resembled the cloisters of our Western cathedrals, and perhaps were the primary cause of their origin—gave place to square niches, very imposing in their way but of less architectural merit. This change took place under the Mameluke dynasty. Of these the Mosque of Hassan, which we first saw by moonlight, is the best example. The third type, and the one which pleases me least, is in the Turkish style, and was brought from Constantinople. More and more the Turkish influence has made itself felt in Egypt—not always for good. But the mosques of this last period have their merit, as you must have admitted when you first saw the Mosque of Mohammed Ali above the citadel. Its magnificent expanse, its wealth of colouring and decoration, its lofty dome and slender minarets almost rival the fabulous structures of the 'Arabian Nights.' I don't know a more splendid and imposing sight than a night of Ramadan, when the mosque is brilliantly illuminated with those myriads of hanging lamps, and a crowd of worshippers are bending low with their faces towards Mecca. It would be impossible to surpass the richness with which the

Mameluke sultans adorned their mosques ; not only in painting, but in material. Nothing was too costly for them, and porphyry, jasper, turquoise, rare marbles, ivory, and mother-of-pearl were unsparingly used. Upon all a subdued light was thrown by their wonderful coloured glass."



SANCTUARY : MOSQUE OF TOOLOON.

With talking, with so many objects and people of interest to engage the attention on all sides, the drive from El-Ghoree to the Mosque of Tooloon on the southern side of the city, between the citadel and the canal, passed as a dream. It is difficult now to

realise the extreme beauty of the building in its original state, perhaps one of the finest of its kind the world has seen. The outer walls were high and magnificent, and of unusual strength, to protect the quietness of the interior ; but the arches have been filled in and their beauty destroyed ; the arcades have been divided into cells, which are occupied by troublesome beggars and the extreme poor. Once the immense court was surrounded by magnificent arcades ; but these too have been filled in, and poverty-stricken, whitewashed walls meet the eye.

Still much that is beautiful remains, and by what is, one can imagine what has been. The mosque does not properly belong to Cairo, for it existed before the earliest foundation of the city. Cairo has come to it, and has grown around it. The city was founded in 969 ; the mosque in 879 : a fact witnessed by two Cufic inscriptions upon the walls of the court. It is said to have been constructed on the lines of the mosque at Mecca.

The interior is very simple : an immense square open court, surrounded on three sides by three ranges of piers, forming a double portico with arcades ; and on the fourth or east side, five ranges of pillars, forming five series of naves or arcades. This is the sanctuary. In the end wall are innumerable small pointed windows, finely sculptured. The walls, piers, and arches are all built of brick covered with a very hard cement or stucco. The pointed arches are very graceful, slightly depressed at the base. Between each large arch is a small window of ironwork. The whole is crowned by a frieze ornamented with light arabesques, now very much in ruin. The inscription of the interior frieze is in Cufic characters. Nothing can be more light and graceful than these wonderful and matchless arcades, with their delicate ornamentations. From certain points of observation, the view of these innumerable pillars and arcades cutting and interlacing each other until lost in a distant perspective is one of the greatest architectural delights to be found in Cairo. The roof with its open timber-work and octagonal recesses, once rested on 108 rectangular pillars.

In the centre of the great court—which is 100 yards square—is a large domed building now used as a fountain, but originally intended as a tomb for the Sultan Tooloon. Like the rest of the mosque it is now very much in ruins. But perhaps the most ruined portion is its curious minaret rising from the exterior wall. Its singularity consists in an outside winding staircase, of which the following is the legend :

It is said that the Sultan was one day absently twirling a piece of paper round his finger, when his Grand Vizier observed it was a pity that he had not something better to do with his time. "Not at all," replied the Sultan. "My mind is working out an idea. It has occurred to me that I should like to build a minaret with an outside staircase, on which I could mount to the summit on horseback."

Accordingly the minaret was built in a very substantial form : a

strong, square base, on which rested a cylindrical tower, ending in an octagon. The staircase is now so ruined that with difficulty we reached the top, where, however, we were rewarded with a fine view over the neighbourhood: a crowd of narrow streets and houses, a small but picturesque fruit-market, thronged with Arabians. The houses look old and dilapidated, and their flat roofs stretch far and wide; in the distance the domes and minarets of other mosques are outlined against the clear blue sky.

Tooloon himself had a prosperous and popular reign. He was the founder of the Tooloonites, which seemed to promise a long and brilliant existence; yet twenty-two years after his death it all came to an end. From being Governor of Egypt, he succeeded in declaring himself monarch. His wealth was supposed to be fabulous, his love of magnificence and display was unbounded: a weakness shared by so many Sultans. His was the Mohammedan Period. In war he was always successful, extending his kingdom as far as Mesopotamia. Having shaken off the yoke of Bagdad, the rolling years turned the wheel of fortune downwards; he was proclaimed a rebel by the Abbaside Khalif of Bagdad, fled to Syria, and there died of disease in 884. His body was never recovered, and in the tomb in the centre of his mosque has never reposed.

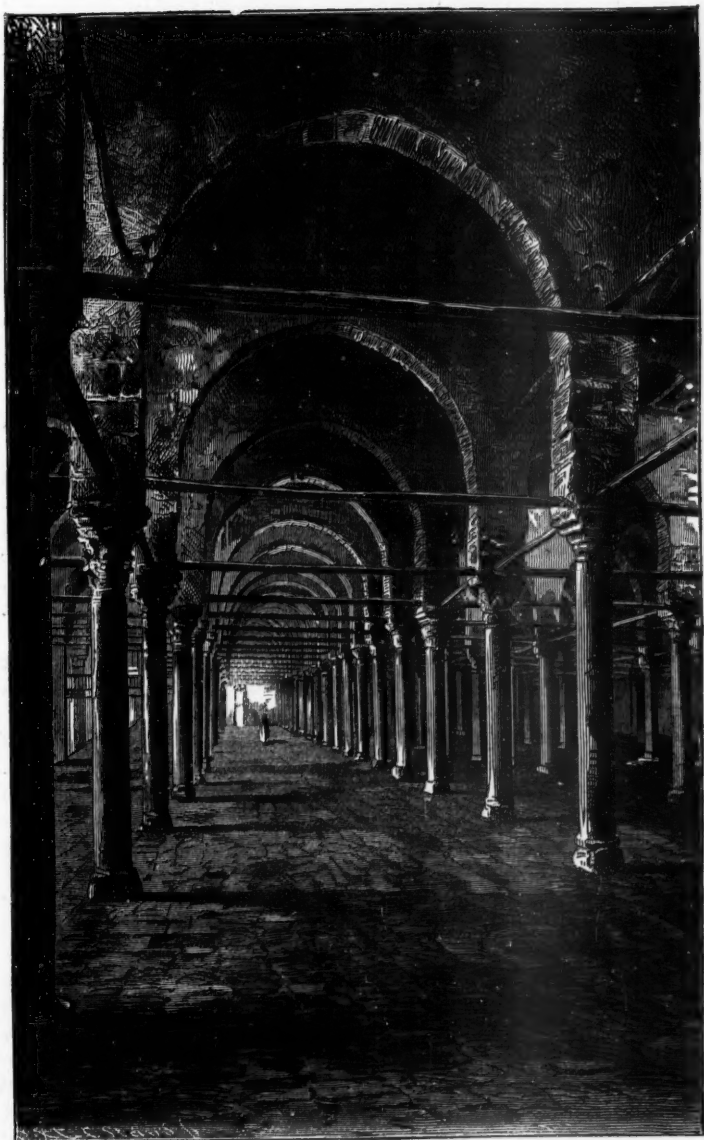
A legend declares that the mosque is built on the very site on which Abraham offered up the goat in sacrifice in place of his son. Another legend has it that here the Ark rested after the Flood, though the Mohammedans for the most part say that it rested on Mount Jûdi in Syria. It is sad to see the mosque in its present whitewashed, ruined condition, fast disappearing under the hands of time. The heathen temples on the banks of the Nile, the Great Pyramids themselves, were built of material to defy the ages; but many of these mosques were constructed of more perishable substance, and the result is a sad decadence.

Yet there was a certain charm about the mosque, whilst the sanctuary itself, with its innumerable pillars and pointed arches, is perhaps unrivalled in any of the Mosques of Cairo. It all spoke plainly and sadly and eloquently of a past age: but everywhere we read the same lesson: perhaps more emphatically in Egypt than elsewhere: that the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them pass away, and to every country in turn comes the handwriting upon the wall.

From the Mosque of Tooloon we presently passed into the more open thoroughfare lying between Old and New Cairo, where you soon come to the windings of the Nile, and a distant view of the eternal Pyramids.

The Mosque of Amrou is situated near the east end of Old Cairo, near the rubbish heaps which distinguish but do not adorn these quarters. Forlorn and wretched, poverty-stricken and abandoned they look, a fitting home for starving dogs and prowling jackals,





SANCTUARY: MOSQUE OF AMROU.

though the latter seldom venture upon haunts so near the habitations of man. Outside the walls of the mosque a large pottery fair or market was spread upon the ground, and near it sellers of the sugar-cane were waiting patiently for customers, breaking the long canes over their heads. For a small sum one might have carried away any amount of really artistic pottery, beautiful in design and colouring; outlines that have been handed down from the early ages, upon which improvement would be difficult.

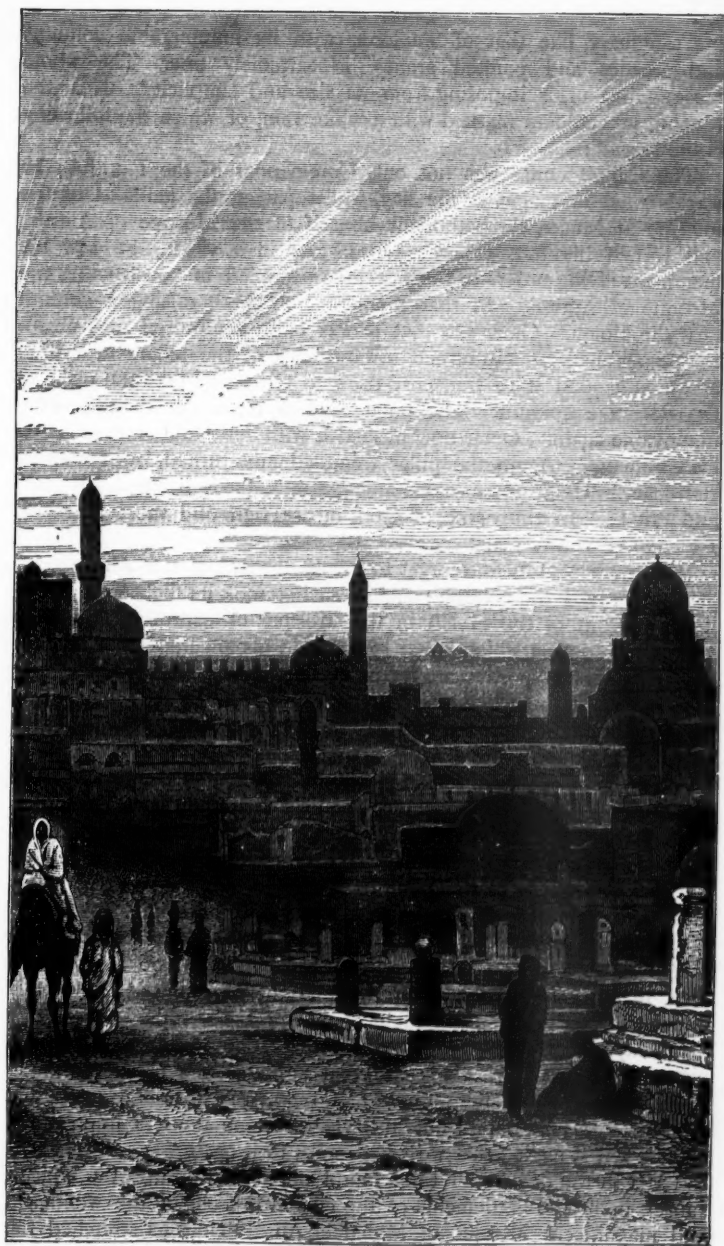
The Mosque of Amrou is the oldest of all the mosques, and so far the most interesting. It dates from the year 21 of the Hegira. The outer walls are of brick; the interior is very similar to the Mosque of Tooloon, with a large open court and colonnades: a single line at the west end, the point of entrance: three deep on the north and south sides, and six deep at the east end: a total of some 230 columns.

It was the only mosque existing in Fostat, or Old Cairo, during the period of the four first Caliphs and the Ommiades. This, as we know, was the Mohammedan period ushered in upon the downfall of the Byzantines.

Owing to its antiquity, the Mosque of Amrou is almost the most celebrated in existence. Eighty of Mahomet's companions are said to have assisted at its construction; and the Kibla was now first placed in the direction of Mecca. In the year 53 of the Hegira the son of the then Governor of Egypt extended the mosque eastward, and for the first time minarets were erected for the muezzins: one at each of the four corners of the mosque.

Egypt at this period was flourishing. Alexandria was the most important of commercial cities; Ashmûnen in Upper Egypt was famous for its cloth factories; Tinis for weaving and gold embroideries; other cities, including Alexandria, for brocades and cloth of gold; the Fayum for its canvas, Gireb for carpets, Taha for its pottery. Thus the trade and commerce of Egypt in those days were very much what they might be in these: the same manufactures, the same productions. In some of their handiwork they reached a degree of excellence which died with them.

The entrance to the mosque is under the centre minaret. The doorway is in the form of a trefoil, above which is a small pointed window. The interior now consists of nothing but the immense open court with its surrounding colonnades. In the centre is the fountain, overshadowed by a large and graceful palm-tree, and near it a small but more spreading thorn. The columns are all in marble, each of one solid block. The capitals are of every imaginable form and school of architecture, including the Corinthian, the Ionic, the Byzantine, and even the capital of the Ptolemaic period reproduced by Greek artists. But all signs of Egyptian art were rejected as heathenish. Many of the pillars were brought from the ancient cities of Egypt, and in past ages had adorned the temples of Memphis, Heliopolis, and a hundred other cities. The perspective of



OUTSIDE CAIRO.

the sanctuary, like that of Tooloon, with its innumerable columns and arcades and pointed arches, is extremely fine. The whole mosque, indeed, is imposing from its size and simplicity. Near the Menhir is a column marked with a white vein, of which the following is the legend :

The Caliph Omar was not only Commander of the Faithful ; he was learned in magic. One day, whilst pacing the galleries of the mosque at Mecca, he bethought himself of the Mosque of Amrou, and turned his face towards Cairo. As in a vision, he saw his lieutenant giving orders to the workmen occupied in constructing the Mosque of Amrou. At that moment they were raising a column near the kiblah. Omar saw that it was badly sculptured, and out of the perpendicular. He turned towards one of the pillars near him, and commanded it to transport itself to Cairo and take the place of the defective column. The pillar slightly trembled, then became immovable again. Omar now pushed it with his hand and repeated his command. Again the pillar trembled and turned, but remained stationary. Omar now became angry, struck the pillar with his staff, and cried : " In the name of God, most High and most Merciful, I command you to go ! "

" Why did you before forget to invoke the aid of the Almighty ? " gently reproved the column ; and so saying took its flight and placed itself in front of the kiblah in the Mosque of Amrou. The white vein is the spot on which Omar struck it in his anger.

In the western portico are a pair of pillars very close together, and it is said that only believers can pass between them. Thus it is evident that the followers of the Prophet associated stoutness with sinful indulgence : a sweeping condemnation.

A very subdued light, full of repose, reigns in the sanctuary of the Mosque of Amrou ; chequered shadows fall upon the pavement, which is further adorned by a number of ragged mats, probably used as prayer-carpets by the faithful. But the mosque is little frequented ; few now come here to worship ; its glory has departed ; many of its pillars are overthrown. It was once great and flourishing. A wealth of colouring and gilding once adorned its walls ; 1290 copies of the Koran reposed on an equal number of desks ; 18,000 lamps gave their magnificent light and effect, when the sun went down. It is difficult to conceive the splendour of the spectacle.

To-day all has passed away, and imagination is left to fill in the picture as best it may. It is said that although the present mosque stands on the site of the mosque first built, very little of the original remains. It may be so, but the visit is none the less interesting ; and we left it feeling that we must return to it again.

Later in the day we all three found ourselves, towards the hour of sunset, upon the battlements of the citadel in front of the wonderful and magnificent Mosque of Mohamet Ali. Before us stretched the matchless view already described, but never too often brought home

to the reader. At our feet lay the great Eastern city of flat roofs, of mosques and minarets, all visible, all touched by the magic of the setting sun. Beyond were the windings of the sacred river; in the distance uprose in majestic outlines, full of the grandeur of repose, the great Pyramids of Ghizeh: tomb-chambers of kings who do not sleep there. Stretching far beyond them, far beyond all human vision, was the boundless desert. Over all was the sky of evening, flushed with gorgeous colours, the sun disappearing in a sea of gold. Rays and flames seemed to dart from the horizon to the very zenith of the heavens. The gates of Paradise might have been opened, discovering for a moment celestial visions. The view surpassed all we had ever seen.

"I never look upon this," said Osman, in dreamy, far-off tones, "without thinking of that passage in your Bible: 'All the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them.' No other view I ever saw comes so near the description. It is a fitting close to a day spent amongst the sacred buildings of the past. And now, as yesterday, I claim you. We need mental and physical rest; an unbending after our varied emotions. We will go back to our rooms, where dinner, to harmonise with our day's experiences, shall be as refined as art can make it. But we shall have no moonlight effects, unless you wish to return to the Tombs of the Caliphs. You shall make my coffee, just as last night, or rather this morning, I made yours. And if we do not exercise magic, like the Caliph Omar, at least we can talk of it. Now come—let us away."

The sun had set, the light was fading from the sky; soon, very soon, darkness would fall, the gates of paradise close; better depart whilst a little glory yet remained. And, also, with such a host, what was left but to obey?

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## A DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT.

### I.

"**R**ORO, do you want anything in town, I am going in this afternoon?" asked the Squire's young wife, as she sat at breakfast one June morning.

"No, thanks, little woman; but what may you be going to do there?"

"I want some lace, and I have promised to see Mrs. Ireson."

"Why do you go to that woman, Katie, when you know I don't like it?" asked the Squire, in a slow rather sleepy voice.

"Oh, you don't really mind, and I'm not asking you to come," replied his wife, bringing him a cup of coffee and giving him a kiss at the same time.

They were very much in love with each other, these two, for all that they had been married nearly two years. She was the tiniest little creature, slight, fair and very pretty; healthy in body, though nervous, quick-tempered, and passionate. Clever, too, and with a strong will of her own that had been fostered and strengthened by the circumstances of her life. The only child of adoring parents, she had domineered alike over them, her relations, servants, and indeed all who came near her. A bright, gay, happy disposition and a tender loving heart had prevented her from being spoilt as she must otherwise have been. When Squire Bransome came home from his tour round the world, he too went down at her tiny feet, and it being a case, on both sides, of love at first sight, there was every prospect of their future happiness.

He was a tall man and broad in proportion, with a handsome if rather massive head, and well-formed limbs. He was some ten years older than his wife, who had just passed her twentieth year. Katie would tell you that, in character, he was a darling old softie, too lazy to stir more than he was obliged to, perfectly happy with her, and quite content to let her wind him around her little finger. Outsiders would tell a different story. His strength was proverbial, and he was counted the best shot and keenest hunter in the county. Though the youngest magistrate on the bench, he was dreaded by evil-doers for his severity and respected for his firmness.

Katie saw him only as she chose to see him, though had she been wise she would have observed many little indications that would have warned her from the dangerous path she had taken. But with curious and persistent blindness she saw nothing, and went on in her loving, domineering wilful way, all unconscious that every act of opposition or disobedience was remembered and allowed to accu-



mulate in her husband's mind against a day of reckoning that must inevitably come.

This morning he said, as he took his coffee: "Don't go, wee wifie; I would rather you didn't."

Katie made a little *moue* as she answered: "But I must get the lace; and I'm sure I must go to Mrs. Ireson, if it's only in pity for the poor thing because you dislike her."

Roger was silent: he did not know how to deal with this little wife of his; she was such a tiny mite that it seemed absurd to imagine she could seriously oppose her will to his. It was a long time before he realised that such was really the case, but he had been aware of the fact now for some months, and puzzled over what to do. He was always slow to make up his mind, but, once made, no power on earth could move him from his decision.

He got up now to leave the room, when Katie said: "Oh, Roro, I saw widow Johnston yesterday; she is in great trouble because you sent Tom away. But I found out that he really was kept by his uncle, so I said he could come back and I would make it all right with you."

"You said what?" asked Roger, in so sharp and stern a voice that Katie stared at him with amazement.

"Why, Big Bear, how savage you are—you frighten me."

She had so dubbed him on their honeymoon, because she said he reminded her of a big brown bear she had known in the public gardens when at school in Dinan. "He was something like you," she had said, regarding her big husband with loving criticism. "Much flattered," he laughed. "He was a very handsome bear," she had continued, "and so loving and lazy, and just such an old softie as you are; he was called Roger, too, though every one called him Roro;" and she nestled up to him, calling him from that day forth either Roro or Big Bear. At first he had asked her not to do so; she only laughed and continued, and he had come to be indifferent about it, if not actually to like it. This morning, however, it annoyed him, and he said shortly:

"Don't call me 'Bear'; I don't like it. What did you say about Tom?"

"Only that when I found he really had been kept by his uncle, I would make it all right with you, and he could come back."

"Then you may tell his mother that you have made a mistake; he will not come back."

"But, Roro, you don't seem to understand; it was not the boy's fault he was kept."

"That is nothing to me. He knew my rules; if he chose to break them he must take the consequences; and you had better tell him so."

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heard from you, for 'the Squire's a hard man,' she told me; wasn't it funny, Roro?"

"Very," answered Roger, quietly. "But widow Johnston is wiser than you, little woman."

"But I may have Tom back?"

"Take care, Katie; you will make me angry one day," said her husband, looking at her earnestly.

"Shall I?" answered Katie, nestling up to him in the loving, kittenish way she had. "What would you do to me if you were angry?"

"Beat you, perhaps," said Roger, slowly.

Katie laughed a low happy laugh.

"You would have to be careful, then; a blow from that paw would soon make an end of wee Katie," and she took one of his large, shapely hands in hers and kissed each finger separately.

"Yes," said Roger, looking down with a feeling of perplexed powerlessness at the tiny confiding thing whose golden head didn't even reach to his heart; "I fear it would; I should have to use a bunch of feathers as they do for babies. But, wee wife, I wish you would understand that when I say a thing I mean it; I will not brook any opposition from you. I am a man, and I will be master!"

"I never doubted your being a man," laughed the incorrigible Katie; "and as to being master, why what an old goosey it is," and she mounted upon an ottoman that she called the platform of love, as it enabled her to put her arms round Roger's neck. "Of course you shall have your way, you always do, but I can't quite give in to you in everything; I'm not a piece of wax that you can mould as you choose. Besides, you wouldn't really like me to be only an echo of yourself, or to ask with fear and trembling, 'Dear lord and master, may I do so and so?' No; I love you dearly, and you love me, and there's no need for such fierce mastery on either side. It's no good frowning; I'm not afraid of you, Big Bear."

And she joined her hands softly round his neck, and kissed him again and again.

She did not observe that he neither returned the caress nor said any more.

She went to town that afternoon, bought her lace, visited Mrs. Ireson, and gave Roger an amusing account of that lady, when at dinner.

"So you went after all," was his only remark.

"Of course, Big Bear; why not?" was her astonished rejoinder.

So the weeks passed by, and almost daily Katie offended her husband by doing or saying something or other in opposition to his wishes. He tried one or twice to make her understand, but found it difficult to explain himself, and didn't know how to parry the loving childish nonsense with which she would receive his remonstrances.

But he brooded over it, the clouds gathered thicker and thicker, and one day the storm burst forth.

Katie had again announced her intention of visiting Mrs. Ireson, and Roger had again expressed his wish that she should not do so; more than that, he had said decidedly, "I forbid your going."

She only laughed, kissed him and said, "I'm not afraid of you, Big Bear."

"Don't go," were his last words before he left the house.

Katie went, calmly unconscious of the storm she was bringing down upon her devoted head.

After dinner, as they were in her Paradise, Roger asked:

"Where did you go to-day, little woman?"

"To see Mrs. Ireson; I told you I was going there," was the reply.

"This is too much," cried her husband, starting to his feet, "and I will put a stop to it once and for all."

He walked over to the door.

"Are you going out, Roro?" asked Katie, vaguely uneasy at his manner.

"Yes; I am going into the town to buy something," he answered, looking at her with a curious expression in his eyes, and went out of the room.

In the hall he paused to put on his overcoat to hide his evening dress, and then walked quietly, at an even pace, the two miles into the town. It was market-day, and he knew the shops would be open still, although it was nine o'clock. Reaching Althorpe, he went into a fancy shop and asked to see some whips.

"Toy whips, do you mean, sir?" inquired the young woman, rather wondering what the Squire wanted with such an article, but concluding it was as a present to some child.

"Yes."

"Here are some nice ones," she said, bringing a lot forward; "this blue-handled one is pretty and has a whistle, too."

Roger took them up one after the other, a sudden remembrance crossing his mind that blue was Katie's favourite colour. Perhaps that decided him in his choice; at any rate, he paid the shilling for the blue-handled whip, and returned as calmly to the house as he had left it.

Katie was in her bed-room; she had affected a singular style of garment when there, learnt from some French friends, and which consisted of a long loose robe of pale blue cambric, with low neck and short sleeves. Very charming she looked now in this attire, her small bare feet in satin slippers, and her short golden hair curled all around her graceful head. Some time before she had burnt off one side of her hair, while curling it with irons for some private theatricals, and had been obliged to have the other side cut off; as Roger admired it short, she had not grieved about the loss of it. She was wondering

vaguely now why he had left her in that odd way, and had a dim idea that perhaps he really didn't like her going to Mrs. Ireson's, when he opened the door and came and stood before her.

"Oh, there you are, Big Bear; where have you been?"

"I went into the town to buy this," he answered slowly, showing her the gay, blue-handled whip.

"To buy that," said Katie, staring at the thing in bewilderment. "What for?"

"For you. Listen to me, Katie: I have had patience too long; now it is at an end; I will bear with you no more. You will not understand that I am and will be master; I will allow no opposition from you. You have chosen in the face of all I say to do as you like; if my wishes happen to clash against yours, then you please yourself, regardless of me. I have told you often I will not have it; I will have obedience from you; you only laugh, and go on the same. So there is nothing else for it; you have brought this entirely on yourself. I cannot bend your will—therefore I will break it; and I know no other way but this," and he touched the toy whip significantly.

Katie had been staring at him in utter bewilderment; it was all so unexpected, so sudden, that she felt stunned; but his last words, above all his movement, aroused her.

"You—you are not going to strike me, Roger?" she asked haltingly, her cheeks blanching and her eyes opening wide with terror.

"That is just what I am going to do," replied her husband calmly. "After all you are but a child, and had better be treated as such. I know your dread of physical pain—perhaps that may make you understand, as my words and wishes fail."

"You must be mad, or a brute!" she cried with a sudden flash of anger. "How dare you speak so to me! I will leave you; I will go back to mamma and daddy," and her voice faltered piteously.

"You will do nothing of the sort," answered Roger, in the same cold, slow tone of voice. "I am in my right; a husband legally is allowed to chastise his wife if necessary. I am not going to kill you, or even to hurt you very much, but I mean you to understand that I am master."

"A man who will strike a woman is a coward—an unmanly, dishonourable coward," cried Katie, wildly.

"Have you done?" asked Roger, a hard steely look coming into his eyes that somehow cowed her. "I am neither a coward, or dishonourable or unmanly, but I have made up my mind what to do, and I shall do it."

"But—but—Roro, I don't know why you are so angry," said Katie, passing her hand through her short curls with a bewildered movement.

"I am not angry—not in the least; I only mean to be master," repeated Roger doggedly.

"You are, dear; I have never gone against you, I have always done



what you wished," answered Katie, in perfect faith and belief in her own words.

Roger raised his eyebrows. It was hopeless to make her understand by words, that was clear. "And this visit to Mrs. Ireson to-day, did I not forbid your going?"

"Yes, I know you did, but I thought you wouldn't really mind. Oh, Roro, have pity; only listen to me, I will explain it all," and she raised her pleading face to his, placing her hands as high as she could on his breast.

"Very well, you will of course find an excuse. Go on, I am listening."

"I only went because I thought you didn't mind really, and she is not as bad as you think—and—Ah, it is no good," she moaned, stopping in the middle of her sentence as she looked at her husband's cold impassive face.

"No good whatever," he acquiesced. "You may spare yourself and me any talk on the subject; I made up my mind weeks ago what to do and I shall do it," and he made a step forward.

Katie shrank from him with a low cry of terror.

"Have pity—have mercy!" she panted. "Roger, don't—Roger, save me!" And sick with fright, she threw herself straight into his arms, clinging to him convulsively as though wild fiends were after her.

Unmoved even by that soft warm clasp, Roger disengaged himself from her embrace, crushing one of her arms with unconscious force in his strong grasp, and taking the whip in his right hand struck her sharply across the bare shoulders three times.

Her agonised cry rang in his ears for long after. Releasing her, he said hoarsely: "You have no one to thank but yourself; you forced me to it," and left the room.

It was characteristic of the man that, on going to his study, he took up the evening papers to read as usual, and, what is more, read them; although across the news of the races flitted Katie's imploring face, and drowning the shouts of applause at some great concert was his wee wife's cry of pain and terror. Finally he put down the papers and thought it all out again. "It is my only chance," he said at last; "if this fails, I must make up my mind to be most unhappy." He looked at his watch; it was near one. Pouring out a glass of wine, he put out the gas and went to Katie's room. The light was still burning, and he saw her golden head on the pillow and heard her convulsive sobbing. He frowned; she had cried too long, she would be ill. Going up to her, he touched her gently on the shoulder; she started with a cry of fear.

"Don't be silly, Katie, or imagine that every time I come near you now I am going to strike you; you know that is absurd. Here, drink this."

"I don't want anything," sobbed Katie.

"You will drink this," replied Roger. "When I come in let me find you have done so," and he went to his dressing-room.

Katie, feeling as though the whole world was crumbling under her feet, shaking with pain and fright, drank down the port obediently. Roger made no remark when he came in, and for the first time in the two years of their married life no good-night kiss was exchanged.

Neither slept much, though Roger, man-like, had the advantage over Katie, who, heart-broken, trembling with fear and pain—for it must be acknowledged she was an arrant little coward—lay shivering and weeping all the night through. She could not get any distinct idea of who was right or who was wrong; she only knew that a great, a terrible sorrow had come unexpectedly upon her. Roger, her Roro, had struck her, had scolded her, had covered her with shame, did not seem to love her, and had gone to sleep without kissing or speaking to her.

He, in his wakeful intervals, had made up his mind what to do; he would go away the next day for a fortnight, after speaking to Katie seriously. Curiously enough, and rather to his annoyance, amid all the turmoil of feeling following that painful scene, the strongest desire he had was to take wee sobbing Katie into his arms and kiss away her tears. But he resisted the impulse. "No, if I do it at all, I had better do it thoroughly," he muttered to himself, drawing back the arm he had half stretched out towards her. Once in his sleep, near morning, he put his hand on Katie's shoulder, and she turned and looked at the strong white fingers, and half shuddered and half longed to kiss them, as she had done, she remembered, some weeks ago, when he had spoken in jest, as she thought then, of striking her. Why had she not believed him? Why had she so misunderstood him? Gently she moved his hand away, and broke again into hopeless weeping.

The next morning, while dressing, Roger, having arranged his plan of action, prepared his little speech, and went into Katie's room.

"Are you awake?" he asked, standing tall and stern by her bedside.

She opened her eyes, and he was shocked and troubled to see how ill she looked. "Yet I didn't hurt her very much," was the swift thought that crossed his mind. He forgot that it was not only the physical pain his blows had given her, though even that was far more severe to a frail nervous girl like Katie than he could ever understand; but the suddenness of the attack, the complete revulsion of her life, had prostrated her; she felt sure of nothing, of no one, was utterly unnerved, struck to the ground.

"Listen to me, Katie," he went on. "I do not want any more such scenes as we had last night. One is enough for a lifetime; but I saw no other way of making you understand what I meant. I shall never strike you again, for if this once does not do what I hope it will, no number of blows would succeed; besides, it is beneath the dignity

of a man, and not at all to my taste. I shall leave by the ten train and be away a fortnight ; I shall not write to you, and do not wish to hear from you. While I am away think over what I have said. If we are to have any happiness in our lives, you must understand that I will be master. Whether you think it right or wrong is nothing to me ; your will must and shall be subservient to mine. So let me find an obedient little wife when I return. Now, give me a kiss."

But Katie, worn out by her sorrowful night, and still half-dazed with shame and grief, turned from him with a shudder.

"Take care," said Roger coldly, though his heart gave a throb of pain as he saw the movement. "I will not ask you again for a kiss ; you shall ask me, and if you do not do so soon, with a prayer for forgiveness, you risk a refusal and will spoil both our lives for ever," and he turned and left the room.

Katie, burying her burning head in the pillows, cried hysterically, "Oh, what has happened? What is the matter? What have I done? Oh, Roro, Roro, come back to me, I cannot live!"

Roger meanwhile was having his breakfast, and making a fairly good one. Half-way through he rang the bell, and when the servant came, said : "Take this coffee and something to eat to your mistress, and ask her if she is well enough to see me before I leave, otherwise I won't disturb her."

Janet took up the tray, and looked with much loving concern at her young mistress's tear-washed face.

"I've got a headache," explained Katie, to her old nurse, while she shivered so violently that her teeth chattered.

"Yes, and a heart-ache too, I fear, my lamb," muttered the old woman, who saw some difficulty had occurred between husband and wife, but discreetly asked nothing, merely saying : "The master wants to know if you are well enough to see him afore he goes."

Katie hesitated a moment ; but her heart was sick and weary for Roger—her Roger, the one she knew, and she felt vaguely that she had misunderstood him, had treated him wrongly ; he was her husband, her darling ; she had sinned in ignorance, but still she had sinned ! Yes, she must see him, she would humble herself to him, would submit to him. What mattered her will, or Mrs. Ireson, or the world, or anything, compared with Roger. Only if she had but known, if he had only said what he wanted, or if she had only understood that she really vexed him ! How blind she had been !

"Tell your master I shall be glad to see him," she said, at last, and then lay back and shut her eyes. She felt that this was a crisis in her life ; she must begin again. God grant it was not too late !

Janet tidied up the room, brushed her young mistress's hair, and bathed her face, and would have put on a pretty pale blue wrapper ; but Katie pushed it aside. "Not blue, not blue ; I shall never wear blue again ! I hate it !" she cried excitedly ; and the old nurse, wondering, put aside the blue and brought out a pink one.

"Now drink some coffee and try to eat," and she left and took the message to the Squire, who said simply, "Very well," while his heart gave a throb of joy.

Katie drank her coffee, but of course could eat nothing, and then lay shivering nervously, waiting to hear Roger's footstep. At last it came, and the poor child clutched convulsively at her pillow to save her from she knew not what.

"You said you wished to see me, Katie," said Roger, and glancing timidly up she saw him standing, tall, cold and stern, by her bedside.

There was a last effort to subdue the pride and will that still surged up in her. Had he not struck her? her cheeks still burnt with shame. Must she submit? even if she did, would he forgive her? he looked so stern and merciless that she became too frightened to speak. Roger stood there a minute or more while this struggle was going on in Katie's mind, then made a movement to the door with a heartsick sensation that all was over; his happiness in life was dashed to the ground. Katie's voice, faint, imploring, recalled him: "Roger, Roro, come back; I am sorry—forgive me and—kiss me."

He bent his head silently, not from surliness, but because his heart was too full for words.

Katie put her arms around his neck and imprinted a kiss on the corner of his mouth.

When Roger felt the old familiar touch of the warm fingers clasping his neck and the soft lips on his, he gave a smothered cry of love, and gathered his little wife to his heart, where she nestled like some wounded bird who has at last found rest.

## II.

An hour later Roger left the house, and it was for the time the best thing he could do; for, the reaction over, Katie began again to feel hurt and angry, and burning with shame. Again and again she would turn back the loose sleeve of her dress and look at the cruel marks on her arm left by Roger's strong fingers. He would never strike her again; he had said so and it never entered her head to doubt him; but would any real, true, loving man strike a woman even once? how would their lives be in the future? Was she to do nothing she liked if he didn't happen to like it too? How even was she to know what he did wish if he wouldn't speak? After all, what had she done? was her sin of ignorant disobedience deserving of so merciless a punishment?

It was after all his fault. Why hadn't he told her that he didn't like her opposing him even in such trifles? How was she to know, for he had only laughed or said carelessly, "Take care, Katie, I shall get angry," which she took only as a joke? "When he comes

back, I will treat him coldly; he shall see I am not a child to be scolded and beaten!"

And so the first days passed on, wearily and sadly enough to the desolate little mistress of Bransome Towers, whose indignation died out quickly, though she did all she could to fan the fire into life again.

She loved Roger too thoroughly to allow any feeling against him to remain long in her heart. He had not told her where he was going, and had even forbidden her writing to him. Any other time she would not have heeded the prohibition, but would have written to his club, feeling confident that he would be glad to hear from her even though he had said not. Now she was afraid, and though every day she wrote letter after letter she only tore them up. Her parents were travelling on the Continent; even had they been within reach Katie had too keen a sense of duty and love to Roger to complain to them.

After five days she began to be really ill; all day she passed lying on a couch near the window, sick with longing for Roger. He was her darling, if he would only come back. What if some accident should happen to him? The nights were worse. She could not sleep, and would remain hour after hour moaning and weeping in a hopeless heart-broken manner. Janet got seriously alarmed, but Katie's vehement refusal to have a message sent to the Squire's club silenced her; she said he would be back in a fortnight and had wished to have no letters sent on. On hearing that, Janet would no more have dared to send a line, even though Katie were dying, than she would attempt to fly. It was curious how every one seemed to understand Roger better than Katie, who loved him so dearly, and whom he loved so well. Poor child, she went through a great agony in those days, that left its impress upon her for the rest of her life!

Meanwhile Roger had spent the first week of his voluntary exile with a man-friend, and had been as miserable as possible. What could Hinton, an old bachelor, understand of the longings that seized him for his wee wifie? Hinton didn't like women, was afraid of a lady, and only looked upon others as toys, dangerous toys. He was delighted to have Roger with him, delighted to perceive that some hitch had occurred between his friend and his wife, though he was too much a man of the world to ask any questions, and took Roger's moody silences and savage retorts as though they were natural. "A fine fellow, spoilt by a woman again, bother them all!" was his general and inward benediction on the female sex.

But Roger was nearly as miserable without Katie as Katie was without him. Not that he regretted in the very least what he had done; it was not the outcome of a moment of passion, he had thought over it long and seriously; but he was a true man, with a big loving heart and a straightforward honourable mind. He had done what he considered his duty, but it was none the less painful to him. Katie's look of bewildered terror and cry of pain haunted him,

until he began to ask himself why she was so astonished. He had thought the matter over for months, it was no new thing to him ; but he forgot that he had never given her the smallest hint as to what was in his mind. He was a man who always found it difficult to explain himself, and rarely saw the necessity. He knew what he wanted and what he meant, but he neither could nor would explain to any one else. After a week with his friend he found life unbearable.

Hinton's cynical remarks about women disgusted him. He longed for Katie, for the touch of her soft fingers, even for the little imperious, dictatorial manner that had so often annoyed him, but which manner, here let it be said, he never saw again. He had broken her will, as he intended, but he found that the accomplishment of his greatest wish was not satisfactory on all points.

As he would not return home yet, having said he would be away for a fortnight, he suddenly made up his mind to visit a great-aunt of his who lived in a lovely spot among the Westmoreland hills. Mrs. Crombie had brought him up when he was a small boy, and his parents, then in India, had been obliged to send him to England—they had both died abroad—and he knew no other home than "Auntie's," of whom he was very fond. Telegraphing that he would be there as soon as possible, he packed his portmanteau, said good-bye to his friend, and found himself the next evening in his aunt's cosy little drawing-room.

Mrs. Crombie was a sweet old lady, one of that rare type of perfect old age that one comes across now and again. After a few days with her, Roger felt soothed and calmed. The old lady saw clearly that something was preoccupying him, but refrained from pressing for any confidence. She had asked lovingly for Katie, and had said nothing when her nephew replied shortly that she was well, nor did she remark on two unusual facts ; the one that Roger had come suddenly without his wife, the other that, being here alone, no daily letter or indeed any letter at all passed between the, at other times, inseparable husband and wife. She had learnt the wisdom of silence, so simply did what she could to make him comfortable, and waited.

Roger, in the long hours during which he walked over the Westmoreland hills, thought long and deeply of Katie, and a faint idea that perhaps the fault did not lie entirely on her side began dimly to strike him. Her look of unmistakable bewilderment and terror at his outburst told him clearly that she had been completely taken by surprise. Yet why had she not understood ? It was plain enough to him, why was it not plain to her ? Yet how sweet and loving and dainty she was, his wee wife ; how he longed to have her small hands clasped again around his neck, and feel her lips kissing him. How out of joint the world seemed, and how he wished that interminable fortnight would pass away !

Time passed on, as time ever does in its indifferent, inexorable manner, and brought Roger to the evening before his departure for



home. Dinner was over, and a persistent rain precluded any idea of going out. He sat with his aunt, silent and preoccupied. The old lady glanced at him once or twice, but said nothing.

At last Roger took a sudden resolution, and, going over to her, threw himself on the rug by her side and said, "Auntie, I wonder if you can help me."

"Tell me what it is, laddie; perhaps I may be able," and the old lady put down her knitting and looked with calm loving eyes into Roger's sombre troubled ones.

The young man paused; he did not know how to begin; it was always difficult for him to explain himself, and now he was utterly at a loss.

"Is it about Katie?" asked his aunt, seeing his hesitation.

"Yes."

"You have quarrelled?"

"Quarrelled—no," answered Roger, raising his head proudly; "I do not quarrel with my wife, but I will be master; she wouldn't understand that I meant it, and so—I struck her," and he looked half defiantly, half pleadingly at Mrs. Crombie. The old lady started a moment, and a transient flush of shame and anger crossed her brow; but she was old and had learnt much, so she said only, "Tell me all about it, laddie."

He was so relieved at not hearing the expected outcry of brute, coward, etc., that words came more easily to him, and with the help of skilfully-put questions, Mrs. Crombie soon saw pretty clearly how matters stood between the young couple.

"You have tried a dangerous experiment," she said softly, when Roger had ended his story. "Please God all will yet be well, for she loves you and you love her. But, laddie, will you let an old woman, who so soon now must cross the borderland to another world, give you a little advice? We who stand, as it were, between this world and the world to come, see things more clearly than you can who are in the thick of the fight. My life here is nearly over; for good or evil it is past; but if I can help you and wee Katie, I would so gladly do it. Will you let me speak?"

"Yes, auntie, do help me. I feel lost somehow, and don't seem to understand women now," and Roger sighed.

"Little wonder since we do not understand ourselves," replied the old lady, with a sad smile. "My laddie, it seems to me that you and Katie began your married lives as many young couples do, without the smallest knowledge of each other's characters. You both built up an ideal, and would see no other, until forced to do so. Your eyes were opened first, for, with all your lazy, calm manner, you are a man of deep feeling and strong will; but how could the child know that, since you never showed this side of your character to her? From babyhood she had been brought up to have her own way. I remember its being told of her as a child of three, sobbing out passionately, 'I want mine own way and daddy's way too,' and she

always got it. So she took it as a matter of course that you too would give in to her whims and fancies, thinking doubtless, poor little loving fool, that she wound you around her little finger, and that you had no will but hers."

"That's just it," said Roger; "she would not understand that I am master."

"Did you ever tell her so seriously?"

"It didn't enter my head at first; it was so amusing to see a mite like that have any will at all that——"

"That in fact you encouraged her," said Mrs. Crombie. "It appeared to you doubtless something like a wren setting up its will against an eagle. But when you began to get annoyed at this unconscious—for it was unconscious—opposition to your wishes, why didn't you speak to her?"

"I did often, but she would only laugh and say, 'I'm not afraid of you, Big Bear,'" and Roger felt a lump rise in his throat, as the words brought blind, wilful little Katie before him.

"She will never say that again," remarked the old lady quietly. "But, laddie, the fault is not all hers. Judging from the little you tell me, I see that you kept all these thoughts to yourself, and went on your daily life as usual, storing up all your vexations in your mind against her, until, as must happen, the day came when the storm burst and caused that terrible scene. Poor wee Katie, how terrified she must have been!" murmured Mrs. Crombie more to herself than to her nephew.

"But why wouldn't she see I meant what I said?" cried Roger, while a pang of remorse ran through him.

"Because you never told her in a way she could see and understand what your wishes were. Think a moment; am I not right?" and the old lady fixed her piercing eyes on Roger.

"Perhaps not," he allowed; "but she ought to have known."

"How should she know? Put yourself in her place. All her life the child has had her own way. She marries and fancies that she will find you as governable as every one else, and you, according to your own showing, were amused at it, and didn't check her in the least. When your eyes were opened, it was too late; she simply could not believe but that everything she did was perfect in your sight; you tried now and then to warn her, but did not do it in the right way, and so your warnings had no effect. Then you shut yourself up in silence, store up in your mind every little sin of wilfulness or disobedience, until the list is a formidable one. It was as though you allowed a child to play near a gunpowder-magazine with a lighted match, the explosion must come; and one day you suddenly appear to her as a merciless judge, terrify her with hard words, and, utterly pitiless, even strike her."

"I didn't hurt her very much; it was only a toy whip I went out and bought for the purpose," said Roger, a dull red rising

in his cheeks; adding sullenly: "I would do it all over again if needs be."

Mrs. Crombie was silent for a while; she was trying to keep calm. Her heart burnt with indignation; a woman better understands a woman, and all her sympathies were with poor frightened bewildered Katie. Her nephew's remark, that it was only *a toy whip he had gone out and bought for the purpose*, gave her a glimpse of the unbending determination of his character that fairly startled her. Any other man, if he did it at all, would certainly only have done so in a burst of sudden anger; but this calm, cold carrying out of his resolution had something terrible in it: as well try to move a rock of granite as to bend the iron will of the man before her. The very intensity of his love for Katie had made him the more severe; he had done it, and, as he said, would do it again if needs be, which did not prevent him from suffering horribly himself; she saw that plainly, while his great ignorance of women pleaded to her somewhat in his excuse. So she sat still, struggling to be just—that most difficult thing to a woman; so few are thoroughly just; they let their hearts and impulses speak instead of their reason, which mistake has shipwrecked the happiness of many.

Looking into Roger's gloomy face, the old lady, with subtle instinct, changed her tactics. She saw he expected that she would take Katie's side against him, and was prepared to hear what she said in unmoved silence, and with a predetermination not to be affected in the least.

"Laddie," she said at last, placing her hand on Roger's head, "perhaps you are right in what you did. I am only a woman, my boy, and so was a little shocked at hearing you say you had struck Katie. You see, wife-beaters are not generally looked upon as a very noble race of men, and——"

"I shall never touch her again; I told her so," interrupted Roger; "and I shall keep my word."

"Of course," assented his aunt; "no one knowing you would doubt your word for a moment; only, sharing in the general opinion as I do, I confess I was rather startled at first. But you are an exceptional man, my dear Roger, and therefore I say again perhaps you were right, perilous as the experiment is; and, mind you, I do not exonerate your wife from blame; she should have had more sense, for she is by no means only a silly, pretty doll."

"No, indeed," cried Roger. "I am very proud of Katie's common-sense; she is often clearer-headed and wiser than two men put together."

"Quite so; all the more blame to her for so grossly misunderstanding your character. She should have been more dutiful, more obedient, should have studied your wishes more——"

"She always studied my wishes—always," cried the young man wrathfully, rising from his position and pacing up and down the room.

"It was only she did not understand that I would be master; that

when I said a thing I meant it; otherwise she is the sweetest little wife any one ever had."

A smile crossed the old lady's lips, but she only said gently: "Come back here, laddie. Put your head on my knees—so. You say you didn't hurt her much. How do you know? She is a terrible little coward, is wee Katie, and dreads pain."

Roger moved uneasily.

"Most women do," went on Mrs. Crombie. "But it was not only the bodily pain—for I don't suppose for a moment that you did hurt her much; you are not a brute, and as you say it was but a toy whip," and again a slight smile passed over her mouth as she thought of the strong man's care that the instrument of punishment should be suited to the weakness of the culprit. "Think a moment, and please understand I am not pleading for Katie in the least; I am only trying to show you the state of the case from her side of view. Think of the suddenness of the thing to her. She had gone on in her foolish, imperious little way, thinking she was governing her big husband, utterly unconscious that he on his side was storing up every single opposition to his will, to pour out the whole of it one day upon her in cold and bitter justice. She was wrong, very wrong, but, Roger, I ask you as a man—a stern one, but I think a just one—are you perfectly without blame?"

There was silence again for some five minutes; then the young man raised his eyes, and they were wet with tears, to his aunt's face, and said: "I see, auntie; I was blind too, and I have sinned too. Tell me, do you think it is too late? Will Katie hate me now?"

"If I know anything of woman's love—above all if I know anything of Katie—she will receive you back with love and tenderness. But, Roger, remember one thing, she can never be quite the same again: do not expect it or demand it: *a woman never forgets*. Do what you will, do what she will, she will always fear you now, always be a little bewildered, a little uncertain, never sure of you again. But bear with it, for she loves you truly and you love her, and I trust God will give you many happy years together. Bear and forbear, laddie, is the motto married people should lay to heart. Don't expect too much from your little wife; she is but a weak loving girl, but she is true to you, true as death. She disappoints you sometimes, but think, do you never disappoint her? Men are so ignorant of women, they perhaps think we are not worth studying. At any rate, they never understand that every true, loving woman builds up an ideal of the man she loves, and clings to that ideal desperately even after the god of brass has plainly shown the feet of clay. There, laddie, I will lecture no more. Good-bye. I shall not see you to-morrow before you leave. Give my dear love to wee Katie, and may God protect you both."

Roger kissed the old lady reverently, and the next morning started for home.

There was no carriage to meet him when he got out at Althorpe station, two miles from the Towers, and though he did not expect it, he felt somehow chilled. Leaving his portmanteau to be sent up, he walked on full of thought as to how Katie would receive him. By the time he reached the gates he was really nervous for the first time in his life. He walked into the house, and gave a slight shiver as the thought crossed his mind that perhaps it would always be so in the future: no Katie would come flying out to meet him, and he knew that if that should be the case his life would indeed be desolate. "How foolish I am," he muttered; "she could not know when I was coming back; she must be in Paradise; I will go there."

So he mounted the low broad staircase, on to a little room he had furnished for her with every luxurious trifle love could fancy, and which they had named Paradise. The door was open. Katie was lying on a low lounge, staring into vacancy; she had been hoping against hope that he would come, but she knew the train had been in some time. Roger's heart gave a great throb. She looked so slight, so frail, so fearfully ill, that a feeling of terror came over him. "Was she going to die?" Suddenly she turned her head on the pillow with a piteous heart-breaking cry: "Roro, Roro, come back to me, I cannot live."

"Katie, my wee wifie," said Roger softly.

With a stifled cry of exceeding joy she sprang to her feet, held her arms out to him with a touching look of appeal and love. He clasped her half fainting in his arms as he whispered, "Look up, wee wifie, your Big Bear has come back to you. Let us forget the past, and, with God's help, begin afresh."

So they once more began their journey of life together over the waves of this troublesome world, with a better chance of being happy than most can boast of.

Roger had tried a desperate remedy, and for a time the result had hung in the balance; but love had won, as true, steadfast, faithful love always will win, even in this sad, misunderstanding, sorrow-worn world of ours. But the experiment is not one to be tried lightly, for not one man in nine hundred could have acted as Roger did, without being either a tyrant or a brute; and not one woman in a thousand as Katie did, without feeling insulted beyond bearing, and having every atom of love in her for the man who struck her killed for ever on the spot.



## AN OLD FRENCH MEDICINE-WOMAN.

BY MARY NEGREPONTE.

MÈRE GALIPAUX lived at Montmartre, in a narrow little alley whose cobble pavement harboured chinks in which the grass grew, and in which were rat-holes tenanted by numbers of the wiry and fierce little creatures.

She had a finer view from her top-storey garret than the great M. Carnot himself from his Elysée, for she could distinguish the round, ruddy-gold dome of the Invalides, and the smaller, duskier one of the Panthéon, the irregular Corinthian and Doric towers of St. Sulpice, the delicate spire of the Sainte Chapelle, and innumerable other steeples ; all emerging from the chaos of brown structures which constitute modern Paris ; and athwart which lay the broad, grey Seine, like a sinuous *moiré* sash-ribbon thrown carelessly between the bricks and mortar.

Not that Mère Galipaux took much interest in the wide and beautiful vista dominated by the Butte Montmartre, whereon she had her domicile.

In fact, she very rarely walked beyond the ancient and well-defined limits of the Mons Martis.

On fête days, such as the Toussaint, Pentecost, Shrove Tuesday, etc., she would attire herself in her coal-scuttle bonnet and Indian shawl—modes of 1840 to which she adhered—and perhaps, leaning on the arm of a grandson, stroll as far as Clichy, or even the neighbourhood of the Madeleine ; but these occasions were rare. She contented herself, as a rule, with regular attendance at St. Pierre on the Sabbath, and, later on in the day, would watch from her window the procession of worshippers who climb the Calvary to lay their votive offerings on the shrine of the Mater Dolorosa.

During week-days the Mère Galipaux was far too busily occupied to be able to concern herself with the doings and religious observances of her neighbours. She was what is popularly known as a medicine-woman—that is, she understood the elementary homœopathic treatment of great or little ailments, to which she added a certain curious manual dexterity and diagnostic clairvoyance which many a certificated physician might have envied. She had been bred in Auvergne, and there was not a herb that grew on the mountains of that province with which she was unfamiliar, and whose properties she had not learnt early to know and employ for medicinal and curative purposes. Her father, a prosperous peasant proprietor, owned a fair acreage of land and numerous live-stock ; and it was well known in the village that Père Driant had no need to call in the veterinary when la Roussotte



(his cow) had the "staggers," and his Norman cart-horse had gone lame, or his spaniel and retriever were seized with any canine complaint, so successfully were they treated and so rapidly cured by his daughter. In the same way she set the villagers' broken limbs, and bandaged their deep scythe and sickle cuts, until her reputation spread far and wide, and people came from miles round the countryside to consult her upon their ailments.

When she married the local chemist's apprentice, and went to live in Paris, no one was surprised; but the older villagers said, with that mixture of shrewdness and simplicity which characterises the Auvergnat, "*Elle fera fortune, la Galipaux à Paris, bien schur.*" And so it fell out; for Aline's husband barely raised sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; and his wife added to their scanty income by practising her "profession" among the colony of Auvergnats settled in Paris; and long ere the young couple's sons grew to manhood, and Galipaux had become head-assistant at a first-class chemist's, she had amassed a goodly sum, which, invested in consolides, brought her in nearly forty pounds a year; and she was known among the poorer classes throughout the length and breadth of the city as "*La doctoresse de la Butte Montmartre.*"

There was no false pride about *la Mère Galipaux*. Pup or canary, child or cart-horse, she prescribed for with the same remedies and the same tranquil nonchalance, which was not indifference and not affectation, although it appeared to partake of both, but was simply an involuntary homage to her own remarkable powers and resourceful judgment. At seventy-five she was a tall, big-boned woman, with keen, practical, grey eyes, above which stretched an immense breadth of forehead. She had a great, arched nose, firmly-closed lips, and long, sinewy hands, supple as indiarubber, which latter could be bent back from the wrist almost level with the arm. She had a forbidding manner, assumed to hide a more than womanly tenderness of heart, for none of her own condition, or of the lowest order in Paris, ever appealed to her in vain.

She had made one or two rules for her own observance.—Firstly, never to take money for attendance on cabmen in the slack summer months, or for treatment of cab-horses throughout the year; secondly, never to treat members of the higher and moneyed classes; thirdly, to avoid meetings with the medical profession upon all occasions; fourthly, to act fairly and charitably towards such of the sick poor who came in her way. And these rules she kept.

But woe betide the people with *bobos* (slight ailments) who hied to her consulting-attic; these were received with scant courtesy, and sent speedily to the right-about.

*Mère Galipaux* deprecated the indiscriminate use of drugs, and thereby unconsciously paraphrasing the dictum of one of the great physicians of the beginning of the century, she would remark in her laconic, incisive way, "*Laissez agir la nature, v'là notre devoir; elle*

schait plus long que nous, et parbleu, quand elle a dit son dernier mot ce ne sont pas nos drogues et nos tisanes qui guériront le malade."

So much for theory; but in case of emergencies, Mère Galipaux's walls were lined with a regiment of bottles of all shapes and sizes, containing cordials, simples and extracts of her own wonderful herbal infusions and decoctions. For distilling purposes she possessed a conical apparatus which resembled the alembics used in the middle ages by alchemists and other votaries of the black art. Above this triple row of flasks hung bundles of dried aromatic plants which once were fragrant and feathery on the lower slopes of the Puy-de-Dôme, and which even still, though dead, contrived to impregnate the atmosphere with a piquant and not unpleasant odour. Surgical books and pamphlets lay upon the stained deal table, showing that the *doctoresse*, as much as her daily occupations permitted, took an interest in the progress of that science 'neath whose banner she marched, though she had no pretensions to be anything but a medical free-lance. And the worthy dame: when not engaged in binding Mère Perrin's *matou's* left ear, which had been almost torn off by rival Toms on his last nocturnal promenade, or in setting the broken leg of Petit Poucet, the baker's errand boy's poodle, or in squirting soothing mixture into the inflamed orb of some Paris street *gamin*, or in distilling and experimenting: would always be seen with a book on her knee.

Her husband had left her in flourishing circumstances, and since his death she continued to live on in the same old rooms she had occupied on coming to live in Paris forty years previously, and nothing would induce her to replace the old furniture by newer and less threadbare chairs, tables and cupboards. The carved oaken clock she had brought with her from Auvergne, ticked pompously from its corner, just as it had done when it was placed in her great-grandfather's kitchen one hundred and seventy years ago.

Mère Galipaux was a member of the Paris branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and had even drawn up a petition requesting the president to interfere on behalf of the Montmartre rats, which were pitilessly hunted and destroyed by the inhabitants of the quarter; but of course the appeal was set down as quixotic, and the army of rodents continued to die lingering deaths in gins, as if no measures had been taken by their protectress for their deliverance.

The steep little alley where Mère Galipaux lived was the happy hunting-ground for the whiskered fraternity of Montmartre. They grew and multiplied in the big sewer underneath the street level; they danced mazurkas on the uneven cobbles, and darted between the *sabots* of the working folk when they returned from shop and factory at twilight; they climbed through the partitions of the old houses which had been built in the reign of Henri IV., and made the usual havoc in loaves and cheeses; their weird, shrill cries awoke the soundest sleepers at night-time, and even Bishop Hatto in his castle

was not more surrounded by them than were the inhabitants of the Rue de la ferronnerie, Montmartre. And Mère Galipaux alone, of all her fellows, tolerated and cared for the strange, destructive little creatures. She waged a silent war on her neighbours anent the rats, for, through close vigilance, she knew the whereabouts of every gutter-trap and poison-dish, and after dark would light her lantern, and, armed with a few bandages and surgical appliances, hie on her unsuspected errand in the streets. Uninjured rodents she set at liberty; those who were already in the convulsive throes she humanely despatched. She rinsed away the death-conveying messes in the cracked dishes and flower-pots, and for these substituted harmless ingredients of a similar appearance. She then placed food remnants in the holes between the paving-stones, and rats that were slightly hurt she carried to her attic and saw to their wounds till they were cured.

Not a living soul in the neighbourhood knew of this remarkable crusade. Life had taught Mère Galipaux a lesson which some folks find so hard to learn, and that was to keep her own counsel; she had forbidden the members of her family to visit her of an evening; and as, owing to her immense gifts and masculine strength of character, her authority was almost patriarchal, none dared to disobey her in the matter.

The old medicine-woman was no respecter of persons, or rather, of the privileged among the animal species. She did not see why there should be one rule for the spirited race-horse, and another for the costermonger's donkey; nor why white mice should be tended and coddled by children in wicker cages, and their cousins the field-mice cruelly exterminated. For her there were no grades in the divine order of Life, whose dim beginnings in the creeping things and batrachia seem so repulsive to frivolous natures. She belonged to the race of healers in her humble way, as surely as Hippocrates, Claude Bernard, and Jenner did in theirs; and even as these great men would have imperilled their lives on all occasions in the cause of humanity, so la Mère Galipaux would have sojourned in plague-stricken places and fever haunts if, thereby, she could have lessened, by one iota, the distressing total of diseases and ills that menace her fellow-creatures throughout the natural term of their lives.

Perhaps on that account, when she died, the crowd of mourners who followed her to her tomb was so great that the traffic in the Boulevard Clichy was temporarily suspended, and the great deserted Montmartre Cemetery was populous for the space of half an hour. Had la Mère Galipaux been the Dean of the Academy of Medicine, she could not have received a warmer tribute to her memory than this spontaneous popular testimony, more eloquent in its undemonstrative fervour than the most polished funeral sermon preached by a fashionable deacon, or a volley of guns fired over her grave.

## GRANDMOTHER'S WAYS.

AYE, Lizette, here we come, my girl,  
 To meet you when your work is done :  
 —The good God keeps us poor folks' time  
 With rising and with setting sun—  
 Your young one pointed to the sky,  
 And first she crowed and then she cried,  
 And I must leave my wheel and walk,  
 Or she would not be satisfied !

Nay, keep your basket—for that's light—  
 And I will bear the child along :  
 Do you think I am too old and frail  
 While you are young and stout and strong?  
 Be 't so. But you've hard work to do :  
 Aye, work of heart as well as hand :  
 You'll need your strength. We pity you,  
 We old folks, for we understand !

Think you 'tis but your babe I bear  
 My little grandchild, whom you say  
 I surely love beyond mine own,  
 And spoil in quite a different way?  
 Ah, Lizette, all my little ones  
 Seem in your baby : most of all  
 Your little sister, long asleep  
 Where the deep churchyard shadows fall.

These ready tears are not for her,  
 (She's with her Lord, where I shall be)  
 But for the hungry mother-heart  
 Her little coffin left with me !  
 It is my stored-up love for her  
 I pour upon this babe of thine,  
 Even as 'tis our risen Lord  
 We worship, while we deck His shrine.

I've seen a sailor, ere he starts  
 For some strange, unfrequented land,  
 Heap largesse on the crowd, or grasp  
 Some stranger's half-reluctant hand ;  
 So, as we old folks wait at rest  
 Beside Life's tranquil sunset shore,  
 The latest loves of life receive  
 The dues of all that went before.

ISABELLA FVIE MAYO.





GRANDMOTHER'S WAYS.







## A BLIGHTED LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE," ETC.

AH, had she but kept in her boudoir, and not stolen into his "study," during his absence, to look for some writing-paper ! Or had she but found it lying about, as was usual with him ; or, at least retired, baffled, and not thought to look in his writing-case for it !

"It was full of old odds and ends, and a letter along with the rest ;  
She had better have put her naked hand into a hornets' nest !"

She could not help seeing the name of his correspondent—"Dear Mrs. Jacob"—nor, having seen this, could she refrain from reading the few following words. For this girl—for a girl of twenty-four she was, although a widow—was just the one little bitter in the nectar-goblet of her rejoicing married life. She fancied there had been old love-passages between Eutheira Jacob and her own husband ; at least, they had been a good deal together. Then, she gathered, there had been some misunderstanding on both sides, and *she* had married Nathan Jacob, the old Jew millionaire, and *he* had married—herself, Agate Smith, at only eighteen, just out of the school-room. Ah, she saw it all now. They had married in a huff on both sides. He had never loved her, and now he was counting on her death ! Yes, no doubt it was so. She had always been delicate, and the doctor *had* been anxious, lately, as to her state of health, and had ordered her to spend the winter abroad. And now, after four years of married life, the pretty widow was free and immensely rich, and *they*, well, not *poor*, but obliged to live very carefully, even though they had no children. Yes, there again, no "incumbrances" on either side ! And he was impatient, no doubt, to be also free, and then—oh, this letter was *too* bad—such haste would be indecent ; she could not have believed it of *him*, her husband, so refined, such a poet, and yet here it was, in black-and-white.

So saying, she turned her eyes, weary with crying, once more upon the half-sheet of paper which she had taken in her dismay into her boudoir, to wonder and to weep over. This was the note :

"MY DEAR MRS. JACOB,—I had not time before to answer your letter, which reminded me so vividly of 'old times.' Just a line now to say that I am every day expecting my wife to be taken. I shall then remind you of your *promise*, and, as soon as possible after the event, you shall hear from me.

"Ever yours,

"GERARD MILDMAY."

There could be no mistake about the matter. Life must now be a burden. All the happiness of it was blighted. What to do? She almost wished, with Hamlet,

"That th' Almighty had not fixed  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!"

Just to take some slumberous potion and go to sleep, to wake where no illnesses are, or disappointments. To leave a letter for him; just a few words. "Gerard, dear, I know all. Your poor little wife will not be in your way any longer. You can marry Euetheira when you will, now. Only not *quite* directly. People will say unkind things if you do. Your poor little once—wife."

That is what one would like to have written. Nay, she *would* write it: and leave it ready. For she was *sure* the doctor *was* afraid about her. And now, of course, she would not have the heart or the spirit to get well. Why should she put Gerard to the expense of wintering abroad? No, she would refuse to go now. Let it be over, and the sooner the better.

So she wrote it out, on a dainty sheet of dull-lined note, and blurred the writing, as she wrote, with tears: and dried, and sealed it with (in black) a small feminine seal: and placed it in a side-drawer of her davenport. "He will be sure to look over my papers," she wept, "when I am dead."

\* \* \* \* \*

"My dear doctor, I cannot imagine what can be the matter with her. Yes, I know she is constitutionally delicate, and that we must not expect her to be very lively, as things are; and that she may have fits of depression. It is not *that*, but there is some extraordinary change. Besides, though not very strong, she was as happy as the days are long, a few days ago. And now all seems altered."

"How is the appetite? Does she sleep well?"

"She cares to take nothing, and seems wasting away. In her sleep she sobs, and often murmurs words, which I cannot catch, in a most heart-breaking tone. She sleeps more soundly in the morning, but there are always traces of tears in her eyes."

"Had any loss lately? Been thwarted or disappointed?"

"In no way that I can imagine. Oh, doctor, had we not better have some further advice? Not that I am other than satisfied; but you know they say two heads are sometimes better than one."

"Oh, I have not the least objection. But the expense would, of course, be considerable of having a man from London. And I really hardly know in what direction the expert would be wanted. The diagnosis is very simple; and, until about a week ago, the case seemed simplicity itself. Change; a mild air; recreation; tonics; pleasant society. Could you not leave for the Continent a little earlier?"

"I would do anything, everything. But now she will not hear of going at all. Nothing short of force will, she says, induce her.

When I press for a reason, she says I shall know, some day, and bursts into tears."

"No insanity in the family, on either side?"

"Doctor! *No*. She is sensible enough, except in being so unreasonable."

"Ha! Yes, I see. It is plain to me, however, that there is something on her mind, some truth, or fear, or misunderstanding."

"I do not see how it is possible."

"No, I dare say not; still, my advice is, take her about, amuse her mind, pet her a bit, and wait a week, and see."

"But I can't pet her more than I do. If I show her, as usual, affection, she draws sadly away, with a look as if her heart was breaking. And she begs me to let her be quiet at home, if ever I suggest any outing or entertainment; we are both, for no intelligible reason, made perfectly wretched."

"Hum! No prior attachment, I suppose?"

"Why, Doctor, she was only eighteen when we married. And she appeared to be devoted to me. And is so still, I cannot doubt; only there would seem to be some great sorrow which has come between us. But I have not the least idea how such a thing could be!"

\* \* \* \*

Yes, she was missing. There was no doubt of it. The bed had not been slept in. (Her husband had been called away on urgent business for one night; and she had pretended, Portia-like, to have left home to follow him.) But she had been traced, on his return (a simpleschemer she, and one needing no Sherlock Holmes upon her track), to a railway station some five miles away. The Severn flowed near that station, and the Severn was, in parts, deep in its windings, thereabouts. Above one of the deepest pools, where there was a current and an eddy, a fragment of her dress had been found, conspicuously marked. But it was all too thin, too shallow. Quite an ordinary detective was set upon her track. And her husband hurried home, with a small key which had been found beside the pocket of the waistcoat (or whatever it might be which they had discovered), on which was a folded label.

"The third right-hand drawer of my davenport will give the explanation. Good-bye, *dear* husband. You will know, now, *how* I loved you.

"YOUR ONCE LITTLE WIFE."

And when he did reach home, and hurried, breathless, to the drawer, it is needless to say she had given the wrong key! Just as, half-maddened, he was about to wrench it open with the poker—anything—he saw the key (as might have been expected) left in another drawer, half-way down. Doubtless, blinded by tears, she had confused the two!

But he impetuously drew out the interpreting drawer, and saw—first

to see of all the papers there—a long slim envelope, sealed with black, and addressed to “*Dear Gerard—my once—husband—so loved—so loved—*”

Out of patience with her for once, he let slip the exclamation: “*Why, what does the woman mean?*”

And then he tore open the envelope, and read (as we have done before):—

“*Gerard dear, I know all. Your poor little wife will not be in your way any longer. You can marry Euetheira when you will, now. Only—not quite—directly. People will say unkind things, if you do.*

“*YOUR POOR LITTLE WIFE.*”

“*Well, I give it up. Mad! Yes, the doctor said so. Stark, staring mad. Who on earth—why, it must be Mrs. Jacob. No one else has that fantastic Greek name. Oh yes, furious insanity. There is no other explanation. I wonder, when we find her, which asylum is the best?*

“*But, nonsense, there must be some key to the riddle. I wonder if the post is in yet, and whether Sergeant Buckle has discovered her whereabouts.*”

“*Come in! What, a telegram? Oh, at Chepstow! Let me see, is there a train to fit? O Adam and Eve, happy in a Paradise without Bradshaw. Yes! Ha! There is! I can—I say, put up some things in a portmanteau, and hail a cab! Off to Muddleborough Junction! So I shall see her to-night, before eleven, and, I hope, get out of this utterly hopeless muddle.*”

\* \* \* \* \*

“*And now, madam, that we are once more together, as, I presume, husband and wife, may I inquire into the meaning of this more than astonishing mock tragedy? And especially into the meaning of this bewildering document—which, duly instructed by you, I have discovered in the drawer of your davenport?*”

“*Oh, don't look so hard, and speak so sternly. I can't bear it, Gerald. You used—I thought, at least, you used—to love me. And I was so happy. And then I came upon that letter, to her. And—I—couldn't—bear—to feel—that—you—were—all—the—while—longing—for—me—to—die—that—you—might—marry her!*”

Here the voice went into a wild wail. But the husband, utterly mystified, remained silent, awaiting some possible clue.

“*And so—I thought—I can't live long, especially now; and why shouldn't I go away a little earlier and be”—with a great gulp—“out of the way? And then, after a little while of seeming to be sorry—oh, yes, you would have been a little sorry; you are so kind and tender—then, you know, you could have married her, and been happy, and I should, I daresay, have made up my mind to it, in the other—”*

But here she quite broke down. He *did* feel some irritation in his entire bewilderment. He spoke with some slight tinge of bitterness under his love :

"I sit and gather wisdom. I suppose this *is* an hotel at Chepstow, and *not* the ward of a lunatic asylum! *May* I, if not too troublesome, ask to *which* letter, and to which proposed future wife for me, you may be pleased to allude? I am so utterly ignorant in the matter that you must excuse my troubling you. *Might* I be permitted a sight of the mysterious letter?"

"Oh, Gerard! how *can* you? You *must* know! Have you no conscience? *THERE*—there it is! And *now*?"

He read it over, amazedly at first, musingly presently, bitter-amusedly at last.

"MY DEAR MRS. JACOB,—I had not time before to answer your letter, which reminded me so vividly of 'old times.' Just a line now to say that I am every day expecting my wife to be taken. I shall then remind you of your *promise*, and as soon as possible after the event you shall hear from me.


"Ever yours,

"GERARD MILDMAV."

"Yes," he said, meditatively—"those were very pleasant days, when she and I used to study photography together. Her letter, I recall, reminded me of them, only she carried it on, and I left it off. She enlarges and finishes photographs *beautifully*. I remember she *did* promise to enlarge one of yours, knowing how it would delight me, if ever you were persuaded to be taken, which, as I maintain, out of vanity, you were averse to having done. Do you see, dear? It is too late to go home to-night. We must make ourselves as happy as we may here. And, do you mind trusting me a *little* more, in the time to come?"

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

And they lived happy ever after.



## THE STREGA'S CURSE.

BY LADY MARGARET MAJENDIE.

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### CHAPTER I.

"**L**IVIO! you will repent this; not once or twice, but daily, hourly, to the last day of your life."

"I assure you that you have said enough."

"No; I will not be silenced! I will speak; and I mean to save you from yourself if I can."

"You are a fool, Gian!"

"It is you that are the fool; and such a fool, my boy, that if you persist in this madness you lose me for a friend. I shall be ashamed to be accounted as such."

"As you please."

"You shall hear me to the end."

The speakers were standing in the whitewashed parlour of the little inn at Maiano, a quarrymen's village nestled into the heart of the mountains.

It was by a strange accident that these two young men found themselves in such a place. The elder of the two, Giovanni Montana, had sprained his ankle severely while enjoying a walking tour in the mountains; the younger, Livio Marchesa Baldara, found himself called upon to fulfil the duties of a very affectionate though unskilled nurse.

The ankle was almost well now, but the result of the delay and sojourn in this little country inn had been more serious than the injury.

Count Giovanni stood by the window with a cigar between his lips, Livio had one foot on a settle while he fastened his boots—both wore the uniform of the Italian army, for they were on leave.

"Make haste and get it over," said the younger man, affecting a careless indifference that he was far from feeling.

"You are an only son, Livio?"

"Quite true."

"You are the head of the family?"

"Folly!"

"It is worth consideration; the family is called upon to look up to you as its head; how would they like to look up to a Marchesa Baldara taken, not even from the bourgeoisie, but from the *canaille* quarrymen of Maiano?"

"Judge others by yourself, Gian! Would you not see every excuse in such grace, such beauty! Are others blind?"



"I grant," said Giovanni, lighting a fusee, "that Colomba is not only beautiful—she is more ; she is magnificent ! But stop, stop, my friend, let me speak. To you she is soft as a dove, tender as a young kid, but look at her great black eyes ! Look at the shape of that jaw and brow ! She is no dove ; that girl has within her, as yet undeveloped, the most fiery passions of the south. She is gentle now ; she has it in her to become a fury, a tigress."

"The tigress crouches beneath my hand !" said Livio.

He was little more than a boy ; the thought that the will of this powerful nature would bow to his, and acknowledge his rule, was sweet to him as her love.

"Yes, now. But when she is your wife, will it be so ? Boy, boy, you are younger than I am, you do not know what the tyranny of a woman can be ; you do not know what wealth and rank and diamonds develop in the breast of the canaille."

"Remember that you speak of the woman who is to be my wife !" cried Livio angrily.

"Can nothing stop this madness ? Oh, Livio, think of your mother, your calm, noble mother. Compare her for one moment to Colomba ! No, no, foolish boy. I do not deny her magnificent beauty, but look at the swing of her carriage, her hands brown with toil, the rough *abandon* of her manner. What more can I say ? Can you fancy your wife sitting on the wall, one hand on her hip, the other holding a vast slice of black bread from which she bites fiercely, and converses as she bites ? This the daughter you offer to your stately mother ?"

"My mother will understand."

Giovanni shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"Look !" cried Livio. "A lily is lovely, white and tall and stately, a great lady among flowers ; but this also is beautiful !"—and he held up a branch on which scarlet japonica flowers grew in a thick glowing cluster. "Who dreams for a moment of comparing the two ?" he cried. "My friend, you talk nonsense !"

"Can she read or write ?"

The question was very abrupt. Livio changed colour. "You are unfair !" he said angrily. "Why ask such a question ? Can any of the peasants read or write ?"

"Ah !"

"These are trifles ; she can learn."

"But will she learn ?" asked Gian. "Does not her worn-out old mother in the torn shawl and ragged petticoat complain that Colomba loves nothing in the world but to sit idle in the sun, or lie in the long grass with the sweet-sour *nespoli* to bite in her strong white teeth."

"Do you expect such as she is to work ? To drive the mules and harness them with her own hands as the women here do ?"

"There are spinning-wheels."

"Which she loathes," cried Livio. "Of what possible use is the

coarse linen they would have her wear, when all that is fairest and best is not good enough for her—and she knows it.”

“Ah! Is that a disposition that will go through the drudgery of learning to read and write? Does she care for any more gentle occupation? Does she dress the altar with wreaths? Does she keep the great vases of flowers fresh before the shrine of our Lady at the cross-roads?”

“No; Maddalena does that,” returned Livio.

“Maddalena is a gentle, homely woman, very unlike her sister.”

“Unlike! I should think so. No one could suppose them sisters.”

“And your ragged mother-in-law, Livio mine?”

Livio leapt to his feet; he paced up and down the room with irritated angry steps. Giovanni fancied he was making an impression upon him; he went up to him quickly with outstretched hands.

“Livio,” he said, “my boy, do not commit this folly. Give up this marriage, it will destroy you utterly. At least, oh, for my sake, for your mother’s sake, give it up now. Come home with me. Let us go at once, at least you will then have time to think.”

Livio tossed off his hands with such force that the hot colour rushed into his cheeks.

“I will not quarrel with you,” he said. “I will have patience. No brother was ever so dearly loved as you are by me, and it is my fault, through this hateful accident, that this terrible thing has arisen. See, Livio; I implore you to listen; I only plead for time. Come away with me. In three months’ time, or less, we will return, if you still wish it, with calmer, clearer judgment. I do not ask much. Come!”

“You ask too much. My word is pledged, our wedding is to be on Sunday.”

“On Sunday! Great Heaven; it is then fixed?”

“Irrevocably.”

“Then I shall leave you.”

“Leave me?”

Livio faltered a little, a quick strange desolated feeling came rushing over him. His friend would leave him; he would be all alone in this curious new world, so utterly out of his own natural element, so curiously uneasy; a fool’s paradise, into which, now and then, would come a gleam of illumination which betrayed the precipice on the brink of which he stood!

The tone of his exclamation struck his friend with a pang, but he would not yield.

“I cannot help it,” he said. “I will not stay to witness such a suicide—such a mad act of folly.”

“Then you can go.”

Giovanni went to a corner of the room and began rapidly to pack his knapsack.

“My foot is not strong enough to walk far,” he said. “I must

take the diligence ; it will be here in a quarter of an hour. I have no time to lose."

Livio sat on the table swinging his legs ; he would not again ask his friend to stay. But he was very young ; there was a fulness in his throat and sharp burning in his eyelids.

"You will not forget, Livio, that our leave of absence is up in a fortnight ; you must be at Pisa to report yourself on that day."

"I shall be there."

"As you marry without permission from the colonel, doubtless you will not bring your wife to Pisa ?"

"No," he answered shortly.

"So ; I will not ask your plans. I shall see your mother in Florence. Have you any message to send ?"

"None."

"Then, good-bye. I hear the diligence horn."

"Good-bye."

Giovanni did not lower himself to say farewell more affectionately ; but his face was quivering.

He went out into the little badly-paved steep street. The diligence had drawn up at the door. A woman, with bare arms akimbo on her hips, stood with a broad smile on her lips watching the driver as he tossed down his throat a tumbler of sour red wine. It was Maddalena, Colomba's sister.

Giovanni took his seat in the banquette. Suddenly Livio came up quickly and held out his hands.

"Gian !" he said, looking up at him with his big soft brown eyes full of wistful pleading.

"Good-bye, my boy," said Giovanni huskily.

"You will not wish me well ?"

He shook his head, and Livio impetuously drew away his hands and stood back. The driver cracked his whip.

"Buon viaggio ! buon viaggio !" shouted Maddalena, as the little carriage went swinging and clattering down the street.

Giovanni was sitting with clenched teeth and tears in his kindly blue eyes.

"I will save him in spite of himself," he muttered. "If I can get his leave of absence curtailed I will have him safe in barracks at Pisa before his wedding-day. But, oh, for time ! For only a few days more !"

He stamped so violently that the driver looked back in amazement.

"Bah ! it is only the cramp," he said quickly.

At that moment a ringing laugh broke on his ear, and a sudden shower of scarlet blossoms rained upon him. He bent forward ; Colomba was standing by the roadside with her arm round the neck of a tall brown mule. She had wreathed its head with the red flowers, and now she flung all that she had left straight at the young

soldier. She knew he was no friend to her, and she was glad that he was going. She flung the flowers sharply, and she shouted, "Buon viaggio!" with a high shrill voice, while under her breath she uttered one of the quick imprecations of her days.

## CHAPTER II.

THE setting sun was pouring its hot glow of golden colour over the quarries of Maiano, turning the deep valley into a mysterious lake of lurid mist, through which loomed, black and strong, the great black cross which crowned the wide-spreading burial-ground.

The road leading up to the village wound along the hill-side in long zig-zags. It was bounded by a low stone wall, from which the precipice fell away sheer down some thousands of feet.

On this low parapet, with her feet dangling, sat Colomba Bondi, the beauty of Maiano. By her side, leaning against the stem of a dark-foliaged carrouba-tree, stood her betrothed, twisting a bunch of field tulips in his hands.

The girl's beauty was splendid, almost startling; her great dark eyes had in them a gleam of light, the rich crimson-colour mantled in her cheek. The coils of her magnificent hair were of fine texture, and black as jet; they were twisted high on her head, showing the powerful moulding of the grand throat.

She sat listening and looking up at the figure beside her. He was a strange contrast to her. Beautiful in a different way; above the middle height; slender, with the Italian's clear olive-colouring, his thick hair and silk moustache very dark, the large soft eyes brown and gentle—in every feature, in every movement, grace and refinement.

The sharp colour-contrasts: the dark carrouba foliage, the white road, the flowers and tangled brushwood which clothed the steep hill-sides, the liquid radiance of golden mist floating in the valleys below: all were blended into the sunset glow.

They were happy. Livio was just twenty-one; Colomba but seventeen. They loved each other, and the morrow would be their wedding-day.

"To-morrow, my love! my beautiful!"

"Ah, to-morrow!" cried the girl, thrusting away from her his out-stretched hand. "But what is the use of to-morrow when you must go so soon, so very soon? I hate soldiers."

"But I must serve my time; you know that. There is no escape; patience, sweetheart."

"I wish you had never come," she cried fiercely.

"Colomba!"

"I wish it! I wish it!"

"You are cruel; what do you mean?"

"Can you not understand? Before you came I was happy. It is

true that we had our little troubles when the times were bad. But bah! that passes; every one else has done what I wished. There are others who would marry me. You are not the only one!"

Livio turned away rather sulkily; the thought of his rustic rivals was not agreeable to him.

"Yes," he said, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "Pippo, who owns the six mules, one eye, and is fifty at least. Nonno, who has not a penny, but would take you to live with his two sisters-in-law and their families in one house. Bardo, who passes through in the diligence, with his scissors in one hand and a napkin in the other, shaving the community while he proposes to you to share his shop and hold half-a-dozen pomades over their well-soaped chins—bah!"

"Why do you speak so scornfully of my people?" she cried. "Are yours so much better?"

He did not answer.

It was sunset. At this hour, his mother would just be leaving the door of her beautiful house at Santa Chiava, taking her way to the village church. It was the hour of the Angelus. He could almost see her coming out of the great overhanging portico, down the steps, gathering up the long black folds of her gown, throwing a lace scarf round her head, under which the delicate features looked more sweet and refined than ever. Turning from side to side with gracious courtesy, she would speak to the bare-headed peasants who adored her, while their honest faces glowed with pride and love for their great lady. And now she was kneeling in the little church. The last notes of the service died away, while she knelt, as she was wont to do, praying for her absent darling; for her Livio, the boy whom she loved better than her life.

The tears started to his eyes.

"What are you dreaming of?" cried Colomba jealously.

"I was thinking of my mother," said he, boyishly.

"I, for one, think that when one is married the less one has to do with one's mother the better. My mother has worked hard all her life, there is nothing left of her but sharp words. Are we not enough for each other? They will be relieved of our support. Am I not right?"

"The sun sinks fast," said Livio. "Shall we go towards the village?"

"You are in haste. What has come over you, Livio, to-day?"

"Nothing! There is nothing."

"I wish to finish. I have another lover, of whom you know absolutely nothing. Have you heard of Nino Dori?"

"A son of the Priore's, old Dori?"

"No, nephew. Well, have you heard of him?"

Livio passed his hand over his eyes. The fierce kind of aggressive tone in which she spoke to him this evening irritated all his nerves to an uncontrollable degree.

"No; what should I hear?"

"I will tell you. He, Nino Dori, was the playmate of my youth; he and I loved each other. He was not like the rough people here, whom you despise; he was like yourself. He had white hands and a white face, but he is hunchbacked, deformed—not much; just enough to take away his usefulness and make him only fit for an idle city life. When he was twelve years old, the Priore sent him down to Florence, and he went into the shop of Maestro Scappi, in a street called the Borgo San Jacopo, to learn carving and picture-framing. There he has been ever since; but twice a year he comes home. He is quiet, and speaks softly and gently as you do; but he does not look down on Maiano as you do—he loves every stone in the hills, he loves the rough stone-cutters, even the brown mules, and, while his mother lived, one was dear to him, and honoured as his patron saint. He even loves my mother, and is kind to her, and softens her with his strange city ways. You should see his carving! The golden fruits and flowers. Ah, he has talent, our Nino!"

Livio flushed. "You speak warmly, Colomba," he said, with a sudden sharp pang of jealousy. "You do not love this man?"

"Love him! Ah, that is a different thing. Look you, Livio mine—always, all through my life I have been discontented with my lot. I did not know what I missed, but how could I be happy? What is there to make me happy, or even content, in this poor and miserable fight with the stones of the mountains for a mean subsistence? If I had never tasted white bread, or set my teeth in tasty city sweetmeats, I might still have delighted in our poor food; but I found out that our black bread was coarser, and the wine harsh and sour. Twice a year Nino came up the hill-side with wonderful golden carvings in his wallet, sweet cakes and candied fruits for me, soft looks in his mind's eye, sweet words on his tongue. Love him? Till I saw you, I loved none other in this rough, odd world!"

"And now?"

"Now?"

She bent down and knelt beside him, she looked up at him with softened eyes. All the strange irritating contrasts of her life seemed to soften, mellowed by the glow of love.

"Now?" he repeated.

"Now! Heaven forgive me! All thought of Nino has passed away. I cannot even think of how it will be when he comes home and finds that I am gone, and that it is all over for him."

"Then he hoped, poor fellow, he also——"

"I tell you it is over!" she exclaimed, leaping to her feet. "And when I think of him, I wish that the day had never dawned on which you and your hard, cruel friend came on the hills together, and brought torment, and storms, and joy, into our quiet lives. But when I think of you I say to myself, the torment, and storms, and unrest are worth while, for I have you—and I love you!"



He threw his arms round her, and her wonderful eyes looked up into his. The red sun dipped down out of the world, leaving pale touches of soft light on the distant summits of the hills. A sudden chill breeze swept through the valley. Livio flung away the faded flowers in his hand, home they went together, side by side. The bells were swinging in the village church, sending with sharp, clashing music an echo from hill to hill.

Far away, Livio's mother knelt on, while all other worshippers had gone. The red altar-lights glared as the darkness gathered. She was praying—praying with heart and soul and yearning tears, for her only son—and to-morrow was his wedding-day!

### CHAPTER III.

"FASTER! faster! I have told you I will give you two napoleons if you reach Maiano before ten o'clock."

"I can go no faster, Signore! See how the sweat pours from the coats of my horses. The hill is steep!"

"I can walk no more!" exclaimed Giovanni Montana, in an agony. "If I do move my foot will be worse than ever. What shall I do?"

"I will do my best," said the driver sullenly. "But two napoleons will not replace my horses if I kill them, and you see yourself they are doing their utmost."

He shouted and cracked his whip, and the horses struggled and floundered on.

"You see yourself!" said the man deprecatingly.

"I see," said Giovanni. A feeling of cold despair came over him; he would be too late to save his friend.

In his pocket he carried an order from their colonel, an immediate recall for both. They must present themselves at Pisa that very day, without an hour's delay.

The difficulty that Giovanni had had in procuring this order had caused this, to him, maddening delay. The colonel had been away, paying a visit to Sant' Andrea, staying with Livio's mother, Donna Christina Baldara, and his uncle Don Giacopo.

Giovanni could not at once find out where he was, and two days were lost. When he had ascertained it, he flew to Santa Chiava and begged for a private interview with his colonel. The colonel was possessed by a spirit of curiosity. He did not like to recall Livio, simply acting on Giovanni's assertion that it was necessary; he wanted to know the reason why. Giovanni was obliged to tell him at last that his young soldier was on the brink of committing the maddest act of his life—of making a terrible *mésalliance*. Then, indeed, the colonel awoke to the necessity of the case, agreed with Montana that not a

moment was to be lost, and even authorised him to put his friend under arrest, should he hesitate to obey.

But it was Sunday morning before, in spite of his utmost speed, he approached Maiano. Montana sat back in his light open carriage, biting his lips, clenching his hands, only constraining himself by the strongest effort not to give vent to the agony of his impatience.

The poor tired horses toiled on, the driver cracked his whip and shouted, slowly they surmounted one steep zigzag after another. They made the last turn. The village lay before them bathed in sunshine, the white dust flew round them in choking clouds, everything was very still.

"Not a soul to be seen! *Diamine!* what is the meaning of it all?" exclaimed the driver, as he drew up his horses before the door of the well-known inn.

The tired beasts let their heads fall almost to the ground; the steam rising from their poor trembling bodies filled the air. A very old woman hobbled to the door and looked out.

"*Santi Apostoli,*" she cried shrilly, "but you must look out for yourselves! All the world is at church, and I am past work—I, that am as old as the Priore's grandmother, *via!*"

"At church!" cried the driver, looking up at the clock. "But high mass must be over now."

"But we have a marriage to-day—a grand festa! The beauty of Maiano! He! he! I also was the beauty of Maiano once; but who would think it now? Are you ill, Signore? You look as if the Jettatura had been thrown on you—he!"

"Has the marriage begun?" asked Montana, white as a sheet.

"See! it is just over. Ah! what a beautiful sight! That is fine—that is splendid!"

As she spoke the western doors of the little church were thrown open and a gay party began to pour out upon the steps; overhead came a sudden clash of bells, within the organ pealed, the strong sweet smell of incense poured out on to the outer air.

Down the steps they came, all the inhabitants of the village gaily clad in the brightest colours of the rainbow, talking, laughing, playing with bunches and wreaths of flowers. Then, as Montana bent forward with strained eyes to see, the bride and bridegroom came forth and stood for a moment in the doorway looking down on the brilliant scene. Colomba was dressed in a gown of some deep brown hue, a small scarlet silk shawl round her shoulders resting on the snowy whiteness of her linen skirt; she wore her *vezzo*, or bridal portion, large rows of roughly-shapen pearls, barbaric as her savage beauty.

She first perceived Giovanni.

He saw her touch Livio's arm and draw his attention to himself. He almost fancied that he could hear her words: "See, your proud friend has come back after all!"

In one bound Livio left his bride, his wedding-guests, at the church door, and came running forward with outstretched hands and a joyous cry. "Gian, Gian, you have come back after all!"

He could not prevent the hot tears from rushing to his eyes at the warmth of that boyish greeting. If he had indeed arrived too late, he felt that it was almost a pity that Livio should be so happy to see him, that his leap toward him had been so full of ecstasy.

"Yes, I have come back," he said hoarsely, "and I suppose I am too late—it is done?"

"Yes, it is done," cried Livio, drawing away his hands. "I see I am mistaken. I thought you had remembered our old affection, and had come back to complete my happiness."

Giovanni turned a little away. "I should like to speak to your bride," he said.

Livio hesitated. "She has no love for you," he said. "The dislike is not all on your side, my friend."

"Ah well, perhaps it is natural. But now——"

"True, it is different now. Colomba will see that. Yes, yes, you will be friends now. Oh, Gian, Gian, how I have missed you! Alone up here in this hole after your departure, the time seemed——"

He stopped himself abruptly.

"Poor boy!" cried Gian.

The quiet tone stung Livio. "Of course," he cried hastily, "one could not expect to find any congenial companion except the one; my pearl in the ocean, my flower among the wild field-weeds."

Giovanni looked up. When Livio left her, Colomba stood alone for a moment in the church door, a thunder-cloud on her brow; then she moved away, came down a few of the steps, and joined some groups of gaily-dressed girls, who surrounded her with eager chatter. Her loud ringing laugh reached their ears even when they stood by the inn.

"I must go; I must return to her," said Livio. "My beautiful wife is there waiting for me. I will come to you to the inn later in the day, my Gian."

"Stay!" exclaimed Giovanni hastily. "I forgot. Livio, I have brought news for you—there is not a moment to lose."

Livio turned pale. "News—not of my mother?" he exclaimed.

"No, no—come with me into the parlour; indeed you must not refuse—it is urgent."

Colomba, looking down, saw her young husband put his arm into his friend's, and both disappeared within the arched doorway of the inn.

Some of the girls began to giggle, Colomba looked furious. "They have business," she said scornfully. "They have affairs rather larger than your lovers, who have no further cares when the blasting goes straight."

"Nevertheless," cried one girl shrilly, "our lovers do not attend to business on the wedding-day."

"Bah, we are not as you are!" she cried.

"There are some drawbacks to marriage with gentlemen, nevertheless."

Colomba made no answer. She sat down on a stone bench under the shadow of the church, with the girls clustering round her; her eyes were flaming, her lips and cheeks scarlet; with one foot she beat angrily on the ground.

"If I am to be neglected like this," she thought, "why did he marry me? But I am his wife; the knot is tied; I will soon teach him how I am to be treated!"

Half an hour passed, the girls got tired of standing about on the church steps, laughing and talking and jeering at Colomba. She also was fiercely, restlessly tired of her position, and a feeling of alarm that she could not control began to steal over her.

"Let us all go down to the inn and find out what is going on!" cried one of the girls.

Colomba shook her head. She would gladly have done so but for the restraint of the presence of Giovanni Montana. Of him she had always felt an extreme dislike and dread, arising from the intuitive feeling that he was her enemy; that from the moment that her young lover had cast on her the look of that intense admiration that had so soon ripened into love, his friend had entered into a silent but powerful antagonism to her power.

"Then let us ask the Signor Priore to interfere," said Maddalena suddenly; and without waiting for permission she quickly re-entered the church.

Maddalena's housewifely mind was occupied with the fact that a little feast was spread in the Bondis' house, and it ought to be eaten before the coffee got cold and the ciambellas became tough and flat.

Colomba looked after her sister with sombre eyes; but she was relieved that some one was going to take some steps at last. The girls yawned and laughed and exhausted all forms of conjecture.

Presently the Priore came down the steps. He was a gentle, elderly man, with a quiet, careworn face. He looked very grave—so grave that Colomba frowned and bit her lips angrily. She knew that he had not approved of this marriage; that he had remonstrated both with her bridegroom and her father and mother, though he had never spoken of it to herself.

He gave her a slight salutation, gently waving his hand as he passed, and went straight down to the inn.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHY do you look so grave? What on earth is it that you have to tell me?" cried Livio, catching hold of his friend's arm and dragging him into the little bare sitting-room in which they had spent so many days together.

"Livio, tell me—the marriage is really over?"

"Must I repeat it? You saw us come out of church."

"The civil ceremony?"

"This afternoon. We go up to San Pietro, you know. There is no mayor here."

"Ah!"

He paused a moment, as if lost in thought. Livio grew impatient.

"If you have nothing more than this to say," he said, "I told you I must go back to my bride."

"Have patience with me," said Giovanni, the tears suddenly rushing to his eyes, for a misgiving crossed his mind that what he was about to say might cause him to forfeit the friendship he valued so keenly.

"Have patience! Remember that I have strained every nerve to arrive in time. It is not my fault that this has happened."

"But what is it? You speak in riddles."

"Our recall—see! It reached me yesterday morning. We must be at Pisa this evening."

"This evening? Impossible! Is this your doing?"—he seized Giovanni's arm with such force that he winced with pain.

"My doing that I am too late? How can you think it? I have strained every nerve to be in time."

"But what is the reason of this sudden recall? Is the Colonel gone mad? Our leave does not end this month."

"The King goes to Genoa. I can give no other reason. The Colonel's orders are indisputable; they include us both."

Livio paced up and down the room. "But what am I to do?" he exclaimed. "What explanation can I give? I will not go! The Colonel will understand the exceptional case."

"But," said Giovanni unhesitatingly, "you have not applied for leave to marry. Can you plead your marriage?"

Livio flung himself into a chair with a groan.

"Hedged in on every side!" he exclaimed. "What on earth am I to do?"

"I am afraid," began Giovanni pityingly, "that there is no alternative. We must obey."

"Can you not go and explain? Can you do nothing to help me?"

"I did what I could, my boy—I tried to get here before it was too late; but in vain."

"I will not go!"

"But think of the consequences! Remember the sternness of our Colonel. It will mean arrest. Shall you be better off then?"

"At least the marriage ceremonies will be complete; to leave the civil contract unsigned will be to insult my bride and her people."

"But will the Colonel be satisfied with arrest? Come, Livio, you cannot face disgrace."

He started as if he had been shot.

Giovanni went on. "No member of your family has ever been disgraced before. It is impossible to contemplate such a thing. For my part, I would sooner be shot than disobey a recall so urgent as this one. Whatever you decide upon doing, I myself start on my return within an hour. The horses which brought me will then be fairly rested. We shall get to Pisa by the six o'clock train from Florence to-night."

"Speak for yourself! It is impossible that I should go. Gian, Gian, it is not a legal marriage until the civil contract is signed."

Giovanni gave a violent start, and turned so pale that Livio saw it even through his own extreme perturbation, and exclaimed, "What is it, Gian?"

"Nothing!"

He leapt to his feet and walked to the window. The window opened on to a small balcony which overhung the valley. It was brilliant with sunshine to-day, the glimmering light so radiant that he put his hand over his dazzled eyes.

"You are very strange," exclaimed Livio almost pettishly. The young fellow was little more than a boy; the situation in which he found himself half-maddened him.

"Strange! How would you have me otherwise?" cried Montana, suddenly turning and striding towards him. "Livio, do you imagine that it does not seem not only strange, but incomprehensible to me, that you, whom I have known all your life and loved as a brother, should shirk the duty of a soldier, and render yourself liable justly to disgraceful punishment? You look as if you did not care; but if you do not, I do. I care that the bond between us must be severed, for I can no longer grasp the hand of a man who is neither more nor less than a deserter about to be drummed out of his regiment!"

"Gian!"

"Nay, your anger affects me not in the least. I must speak the truth, whatever you may say!"

"Gian, do you know what you are saying? You will give me up?"

"Yes, as I would give up anyone else who disgraced his country and his regiment."

"You say this to me?"

It was indeed a bitter moment to Livio Baldara; the conflicting feelings in his breast were almost more than he could bear. The



cost of the *mésalliance* was coming upon him too soon in all its bitterness. He had imagined himself so deeply in love with his peasant-bride that no sacrifice of home, friends, or mode of life would be too great for her sake. And yet, one week alone in this wild mountain village, with no occupation save making love, with no refinements of life about him, no pleasant friends' society, had half-awakened him from his dream. He had consoled himself with his belief in her power of raising herself; he had even pictured to himself his mother educating his beautiful savage, softening, refining, teaching her, and now, suddenly, rudely, the moment of decision came upon him. The sacrifice was still incomplete, he must give up his dearest friend, his honour as a gentleman, his place among his country's soldiers, all for her sake, or——

"Heaven help me!" he cried aloud. "Gian, I am very miserable."

His head fell on his hands, while burning tears forced themselves through his fingers.

"My dear, dear fellow," cried Giovanni, softened at once, "do not think that I am not sorry for you. Indeed, my heart aches; but oh, Livio my boy, what can I say? Must you sacrifice your whole career—all that is worth living for on earth?"

"Gian, she is my wife!"

"I know"—he was only just able to prevent himself from adding, "Worse luck that it should be so!" in time—"I know, Livio; I know that it is too late to remedy that. But listen. You can surely come back later. She perhaps is herself wise enough to see that your honour is at stake. You surely do not do justice to her common-sense."

Livio only shook his head.

Giovanni felt half wild; what could he say or do to persuade his friend?

At that moment the door was pushed gently open and the Priore came in.

The good man gave an involuntary start when he saw the two friends—the bridegroom, with his face buried in his hands, the other pacing nervously up and down, both evidently in a condition of extreme agitation.

"Forgive me if I intrude, gentlemen," said the village priest courteously; "but the question is urgent. Sir," turning to Livio, "your young bride is in some distress; there is confusion and dismay among your guests. I would urge you to put an end to this trouble, but that I am greatly afraid that you have just received some bad news."

"Bad news, indeed!" exclaimed Livio, raising his head. "Gian, explain to the Priore. Let him decide for me. I will abide by his decision."

"No, no!" exclaimed Montana, wholly distrusting the gentle,

peasant-bred priest, angrily asking himself what such an one would know about the honour binding the actions of a gentleman.

"I tell you we must make an end of this," cried Livio, "or it will drive me mad. See, then, Signor Priore. Here is my friend who has come up the mountains travelling at his utmost speed to bring me this—an immediate recall to our regimental duties, our leave cancelled."

The Priore slowly adjusted his spectacles. "I hardly understand," he began.

"The matter is simple enough," said Giovanni hastily. "You, sir, who understand in its fullest sense the necessity of discipline, can surely grasp the fact that a soldier must obey his chief."

"Undoubtedly you do me no less than justice."

There was such a simple dignity in the Priore's manner that Giovanni felt ashamed of himself.

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly. "Let me explain clearly. For some reason best known to himself our Colonel orders us to report ourselves at Pisa this very night."

"So soon?"

"You see that our departure should not be delayed."

"This is most unfortunate! The civil contract is not yet signed."

"Is that so important, Signor Priore?" exclaimed Giovanni. "Many of your cloth have considered it unnecessary. Anyhow, it can be postponed."

"Perhaps you are right," said the Priore slowly.

"My opinion as to its necessity is of small importance; it is the law. Our friend here knows that it must be carried out. Meanwhile——"

"Then I am to go? Who is to tell Colomba?"

Ah, yes, that was the question! The Priore shrank back; Giovanni's face turned a shade paler.

"I must tell her myself."

Livio rose to his feet, pushing back his hair; he looked so white, so sorrowful, that Giovanni bit his lips to conceal his suffering.

Without a word the Priore left the room. They knew for what he had gone, and neither spoke. Livio was bracing himself up for the interview.

Giovanni walked quickly to the door and pushed it open. A little group of people were standing about outside, among them the driver of his carriage. In quick, harsh tones he desired this man to harness his horses at once, and very reluctantly he went off to obey, growling and grumbling over the ill-luck which deprived him of all possible share in the wedding-feast.

Then Giovanni returned to his friend. He had rightly judged that Livio would be anxious, nay, eager to be off at once when his interview with his wife was over, and with a wife so uneducated, so incapable of argument or reasoning, the interview could not possibly be long.

Meanwhile the Priore had gone straight to the seat on which Colomba was still sitting. She rose to her feet when she saw him approach, the crimson colour deepening in her cheeks.

The girls and women eagerly clustered round him, all asking questions at once. Colomba alone asked no questions, only her great dark eyes grew wide with a sudden, sharp anxiety.

The Priore looked sad and disturbed; it was very evident that he was the bearer of bad news.

"But what is it?" cried the women. "Is the bridegroom taken ill? Has his friend bewitched him? What can you tell us?"

The Priore waved his hands. "Peace, peace, my friends!" he exclaimed. "Colomba, this concerns you only."

She drew up her tall figure and looked straight into his eyes.

"Do you bring a message from my husband?" she said.

The good Priore wiped his brow. "Yes—and no," he answered. "His friend Signor Giovanni has brought him bad news—news that will annoy us all."

"Why does he not come and tell me?" said Colomba haughtily.

"He has asked me to fetch you. He wished to tell you himself."

There was a little murmur among the women.

"Poor fellow! Poor dear! And to receive bad news on his wedding-day! Madonna help him! It is a pity!"

But there was no look of softening in Colomba's face.

"He should not have left me like this!" she said harshly. "A wife's place is by her husband's side when he is in trouble."

"Then come to him at once," said the Priore hastily, for at the inn-door he saw signs of approaching departure; the driver was drawing out his rickety old carriage from the archway under which it had been sheltered.

Colomba said no more. She looked neither to right nor left, but went straight through, her companions following her guide.

"Courage, Livio, courage!" exclaimed his friend, for at the sound of approaching footsteps Livio leapt to his feet.

He made no answer. His eyes were fixed on the door, and his face grew white and drawn as the Priore drew it open and admitted Colomba.

He advanced a few steps to meet her, and then stood still. "Great Heaven! how shall I tell her!" he exclaimed.

Giovanni came forward, bowing with a respect he had never before shown to his friend's bride.

"Signora," he said, "I have the misfortune of being the bearer of bad news."

"My husband can speak for himself," answered Colomba, turning from him with a grand movement of supreme contempt.

Giovanni drew back; he stood by the window, and the Priore joined him there. Giovanni felt bitterly that it was no longer in his power to help his friend. At that moment a feeling of bitter hatred

to this woman who had destroyed Livio's life surged up in his breast. It would be a tug of war between them ; one or the other would gain the victory.

"Colomba !" cried the poor young fellow, advancing and putting his arm round her to draw her close to him. "My wife, my love ! how can I tell you. There is no alternative, no choice ; we must part, and at once."

She drew herself away from him. "For ever ?" she exclaimed hoarsely.

"For ever ? What are you thinking of ? Heaven forbid. What could part us now for ever ? Are you not my wife ? No, no ; only for a time, a little time, that I may make explanations, get leave. In a few days, a week at the outside, I shall return."

"Very well," she said coldly. "I suppose your friend's reasons are urgent."

"Not urgent, but imperative. I am a soldier ; this comes from my colonel. I have not a moment to lose."

"And what results if you disobey ?"

"Disgrace."

"That is all !"

Again he attempted to take her hand ; again she repulsed him, fierce pride was blazing in her flashing eyes.

"Go !" she exclaimed. "I would not lift a finger to prevent your departure."

"Cola, you are hard ! you are cruel !"

She looked at him, her breast heaving ; in another moment she felt that she should break down into wild sobbing. The reason he gave seemed to her absurd, perfectly inadequate ; with all her strong, undisciplined nature, this strange girl loved her young husband, and the thought that flashed across her that his love for her did not equal hers for him caused her such sharp agony that it was all she could do not to utter the sharp cry which swelled her throat to suffocation.

"It is only for a little while—a few days. If necessary, I will buy my discharge ; not even the service shall keep me from my wife. And now, you will forgive me, my beloved, my heart's love ?"

But she drew away ; she would not even let him kiss her hand.

Giovanni saw his friend's almost unbearable distress ; he would have gone forward, but the Priore gently laid a detaining hand on his arm. They turned away not to witness Livio's grief, not to hear his passionate pleading that Colomba would forgive, would take his hand at least, would believe in his faithful, unutterable love.

There was a loud rattling commotion outside. Some one shouted out that the carriage was ready. Only too thankful to cut short this distressing scene, Giovanni sprang forward, and the Priore slowly advanced.

Colomba still stood motionless ; the passion of feeling choked her utterance ; her breast heaved with long-drawn breaths, impotent fury

and resentment combatted with fierce love. Once she raised her arms as if she would allow him to clasp her to his heart; then suddenly she drew back, and with all her strength she struck him on the breast. The blow was so violent and unexpected that Livio staggered back; he covered his face with his hands.

He was not conscious that the Priore came forward and put his cold hand on Colomba's shoulder—a touch so quiet and sobering that she let him lead her away.

Giovanni said, in a studiously matter-of-fact voice, that the carriage was ready, and Livio followed him out and took his place.

The driver cracked his whip; there was a jingling of little bells, and they were off.

From all the assembled villagers, now gathered together in angry groups, rose up a sort of hooting shout, mingled with some laughter and jeers. At the sound, Colomba raised her head. She was alone with the Priore.

"Do you hear?" she said fiercely. "Already—even to-day—the mockery has begun."

He began some phrase about explanations; but she cut him short.

"Let me alone," she said.

She went out on to the balcony with a low moan, and crouched down, leaning her burning brow against the iron railings.

## CHAPTER V.

THE great villa of Santa Chiava was one of the most beautiful of the large country houses in the Val d'Arno. It lay surrounded by wide stretches of olive woods and dark cyprus groves. The house was half encircled by a wide verandah or loggia, supported on pillars; stone terraces with balustrades descended by flights of shallow steps to the level of the wide gardens. The walks and alleys in those gardens were sheltered by flowering shrubs, groups of arbutus and sweet-scented bay. They were decorated with marble statues and bright fanciful fountains dancing in the sunshine, the marble basins overgrown with tangled water-lilies, and alive with the harsh croak of frogs.

The summer was at its height. It was the month of August. All the sun-blinds were drawn; light curtains of fresh striped yellow and white linen were draped round the loggias; every window was closed to exclude the hot summer air and preserve the coolness within.

Gian Montana, dressed in white linen from head to foot, stepped indoors from the burning heat and was immediately conscious of a delicious feeling of fresh coolness; it seemed the coolness of a cellar or vault, so great was the force of the contrast.

It was a very large salon in which he found himself; the walls were hung with the silver-green silk so peculiarly becoming a background to the many pictures with which they were covered. There were family portraits, landscapes, one or two fine Claudes, one or two Guardis, a great canvas of the rich Venetian school, and, in strong contrast, two exquisite Philipppo Lippis. The pictures were some good, some indifferent, some really bad.

The floor was of polished marble, reflecting the heavy gilt furniture and the grand old marriage-chests, gorgeous in splendid gilding, and paintings of gay processions adorning them. All was in semi-darkness; Gian at first could distinguish nothing; he came in dazzled by the brilliancy outside.

He had hardly grown accustomed to the obscurity when the heavy tapestry portières at the far end of the room were pushed aside, and a young fair girl came running to meet him with eager outstretched hands.

"Gian! Gian! he is better—he is sensible!" she exclaimed.

"Thank God—at last!" cried Giovanni. "Oh, Aimée, it has been long!"

"He is better; Lorta Morello hopes at last. My dear Aunt Christina is happy."

Gian sat down with a long-drawn breath, motioning the bright child before him to follow his example.

She was about fifteen years old, a fair, very sweet-looking child. Aimée de Marselin was the orphan child of Donna Christina's only sister, who had married a Frenchman, and had died in far-distant France, with her last breath commending her little child to her sister's care. The guardianship was shared by a French uncle; he was glad to be spared all personal responsibility, making only one stipulation—that his little niece should be educated in the Convent of Notre Dame d'Anjou; so that, though her home might not be in Italy, she should yet remain in touch with her father's country.

Aimée grew up the darling and favourite of the house, so that her periodical return for the holidays was welcomed by her adopted mother and by the old Count, her brother-in-law, the kind, eccentric bachelor uncle, who spoilt Livio and adored Signora Christina all through life.

Aimée regarded Livio as a brother, and one to be conciliated, who had all a young man's dislike of little girls. But of late, this cool regard had all turned into sharpest fear. For three long, endless months Livio Baldara had been lying at death's door in his beautiful home; for three months fighting with a deadly malaria, his pulse racing at frightful pace, his temperature at such a height, that day after day the doctor shook his head and muttered to himself that it could not last, that the end must be very near.

And all this time, in untiring devotion, his mother nursed him. Giovanni came to him when he could get leave. His colonel was



merciful, knowing what the attachment between the two friends had always been ; and when Giovanni was able to come, the poor mother allowed herself some repose. Livio, who, in his state of half delirium, would permit no hand but hers to feed or tend him, would accept Giovanni's services without a murmur ; always seeming better and more restful under his care than with any one else.

Donna Christina never lost hope. It never seemed to enter her head that her son might die. She was fighting so valiantly for his life, he must get better ; she could not doubt it. But as the days went on, night succeeding day, always the same repetition—the temperature rising to a frightful height at night, down again in the morning—a sort of dull monotony seemed to hang over the sick-room ; a monotony full of condensed torture.

The doctor would say to Giovanni, with tears in his eyes : “ But what will happen when we lose him, my friend ? ”

“ His mother will not have long to wait,” he answered huskily.

The doctor glanced at the figure bending over that restless sick-bed—tall, slender ; in the close-fitting blackness of her long gown the great dark eyes daily grew more large and hollow, the thick braids of fine black hair were more plentifully streaked with white. He could only shake his head.

Late that night, when Morello looked at his patient, some instinct warned him that a change was at hand : he kept his carriage and prepared to stay all night. He was a busy man, he could not spare his rest. He went to bed quietly, and was not astonished when, about three o'clock in the morning, a light tap at his door was followed by the summons of the nurse.

In a moment he was ready.

Livio's bed, for the sake of air, had been drawn out into the centre of his large many-windowed room ; a gilded scone above the head, on which was placed a tall ivory crucifix. He lay motionless, breathing very softly.

Donna Christina sat beside him. She looked up, as the doctor came in, with questioning eyes, in which he could read the dawning of despair.

Morello looked very grave, but as he stood there the gravity passed away.

The young Count was terribly changed by his long illness, the thinness of the white hands lying on the coverlet was startling ; his face was white as marble, save where the blue veins stood out in strong relief ; his eyes were closed.

Dr. Morello looked up. “ The temperature has fallen,” he said, in a low whisper. “ It is far below normal.”

His mother started. For the moment for the first time hope had actually died in her breast ; now her force and activity revived. For long hours they fought with deadly overpowering weakness. More than once they thought he was gone, the power of swallowing seemed to be

lost, the grey death-like hue deepened on his face ; but life is strong in a young vigorous frame of one-and-twenty, and strong and prevailing are a mother's prayers.

When dawn had broken, and the songs of the birds outside began to dispel the stillness of the night, the doctor went to the windows and threw them wide open. A little fresh, cool breeze came in, bearing with it the sweet smell of *seringa*. It played round the room, passing tenderly over the sick man's hair.

There was a movement ; his large dark eyes unclosed. His mother, with her soul bursting with thanksgiving, saw in them the look she had looked for so long in vain ; the re-birth of consciousness in their depths, and over his lips came suddenly a very slight smile. The heavy eyelids closed again, the breathing was low and regular.

"He sleeps," said Morello, wiping his brow. "Madame, your son is saved !"

It was about five o'clock in the summer morning that Donna Christina came softly to Aimée's bedside.

The child was asleep, surrounded by the white lacy folds of her mosquito-curtains. She raised herself at the first sound of movement in the room, hushed as it was.

"Good news, Aunt Christina ? I see it in your eyes. Is it good news ?" she cried.

Her aunt could not speak, she could only bow her head in assent, the large tears were running down her cheeks. She clasped the little, slender figure in her arms and pressed her lips to the sweet fair cheek, while Aimée threw her arms round her, and, in sympathy too fervid for words, sobbed out her joy and gratitude.

Donna Christina could not stay ; she hurried back to her boy's bedside ; so much depended still on unremitting care and watchfulness.

Aimée, hastily rising and dressing herself, felt life, and joy, and merriment rising up once more in a joyous torrent of indescribable happiness. Aimée had scarcely finished her solitary breakfast, when the sound of wheels made her run to the windows, and thence downstairs to the big salon to greet Giovanni Montana.

Eagerly he questioned her ; he grew half-impatient with her because she did not know in what the amelioration consisted. She knew no details, nothing more than the joy and thankfulness of his mother, and Dr. Morello's words to the servants as he left the house an hour before—

"Your young master is saved. God be praised !"

"Have you come to stay, Gian ?" said Aimée wistfully. "Aunt Christina ought to rest."

"Yes ; I can stay some days. Of course she must rest. I will go to her at once. Oh !" he exclaimed, with a sudden, eager, raising of his head. "What it is to hope again !"

"Have you been so very hopeless ?" said the child thoughtfully. "I was not. We prayed so earnestly."

"You were right," he answered. "We must indeed be thankful."

He went away. Little Aimée watched his departure with a longing wish in her gentle, little breast that she could be of some use in some way, however slight, to the dear aunt whom she loved as a mother.

Livio's room was one of a long suite opening into each other on the ground-floor. When Giovanni had first brought him home from Pisa, sinking under the fierce fever which had taken possession of him, he had taken a fancy to this room, and declared that here he could breathe better than in any other in the house, for here were space and air. Giovanni entered this room with the soft tread to which all were accustomed now.

The silence that reigned was intense, so intense that the buzz of an angry fly beating itself against the window-panes sounded almost painfully loud.

At first, Giovanni found it difficult to distinguish objects clearly in the dim light, but, as his eyes became accustomed to the obscurity, he saw Donna Christina sitting by her son's bed. In that attitude, overcome by the fatigue of the last days, she had fallen asleep with her arm under Livio's head.

The nursing-sister, in her large cap and snowy sleeves, was seated near the window. She rose, with a bright smile of congratulation on her kind face, and came towards him.

"Can you not take her place?" she whispered softly. "If she does not rest she will break down, and there will be much to go through yet."

Giovanni started, as a nearer look showed how deep the lines had grown in that white, worn face. He went up to her, and laid a gentle hand on hers.

Donna Christina woke very quietly, without any start that might disturb her son. Giovanni bent forward. "Leave him to me, now," he whispered. "You must rest so as to be ready when he wants you again. Will you not go now?"

Very skilfully he put his own arm into the place of hers, tenderly drawing her away; but when he had taken her place, without disturbing Livio, she was so stiff and worn that she could not rise to her feet. The nurse half led, half carried her away.

Livio slept on, wrapt in the soft, natural sleep that was soothing him back to life.

*(To be continued.)*



A MAN'S REMONSTRANCE.

WHEN full into my life you came,  
You spake no word of hope ; yet still  
Your eyes shed forth a magic flame  
That led me captive at your will.

No loyal promise from your tongue  
Fell sweetly on my yearning ear ;  
Yet, when my heart your praise had sung,  
Your blushes pledged that such was dear.

Ah ! well the music of your heart  
You held in hand, my soul to thrill !  
But spoken love—with matchless art—  
'Twas left to measure at my will.

Yet, was there nothing in your glance  
Of love's divine and quenchless flame ?  
That look which could so well enhance  
The charming witchery of your name.

Was there no pledge in those sweet eyes  
That dazzled bright beyond eclipse ?  
Could I but treat with vague surmise  
The glowing words from off your lips.

Yet, with it all, you fail me now,  
And seal your deed with alien glance,  
As if you ne'er inspired a vow  
In all the round of circumstance.

Ah ! heart that yet may sadly miss  
Love's loyalty ; say, is it wise  
To lead a soul o'er plains of bliss,  
Then shut it out from Paradise ?

ALEXANDRE LAMONT.



